

Becoming

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Characters:	Hannibal Lecter , Will Graham , Will Graham's Dogs , Will Graham's Father , Alana Bloom , Margot Verger , Mason Verger , Molson Verger , Jack Crawford , Molly Foster , Peter Bernardone , Francis Dolarhyde , Franklyn Froideveaux , Tobias Budge , Randall Tier , Matthew Brown (Hannibal) , Freddie Lounds , Abigail Hobbs , Dr. Frederick Chilton , Jimmy Price , Brian Zeller , Reba McClane , Kade Prurnell
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Becoming

by [anulla](#)

Summary

The Hunger Games were made as a punishment towards the districts and was disguised as a blessing. The reality is that the Capital can take your children and turn them into monsters and murderers for the Capital's entertainment and the districts' obedience. Molson Verger enjoys his tyrannical rule over Panem and enjoys watching the agony others suffer by proxy. He has set a tone of fear within the people to where they won't engage in even a hushed whisper of negative gossip.

But what happens when two monsters with a similar darkness residing within them are sent into the arena together?

Will Graham, a boy who adopts the minds of others as his own to fool others, and Hannibal Lecter, a boy with a charming and proper person suit. Achilles and Patroclus. They will conquer the world together just out of sheer desire.

Krisdamas

Chapter Summary

Krisdamas- *Falling*

“Human emotions are a gift from our animal ancestors. Cruelty is a gift humanity has given itself.” -*Hannibal Lecter*

Chapter Notes

This work is being beta-read by Adriana_grinch, she is absolutely lovely. Thank you for the help!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The soft light of the moon streamed through the boarded-up window of Will's bedroom. The pearly shine of it flittered over his cheekbones and nose in an intimate caress as he took soft, deep breaths. He couldn't sleep. He didn't want to. The only thing waiting for him when he sleeps is a dance with the darkness that has hooked itself on Will's imagination. A terrifying waltz with the demons of those who live troubled lives within the electric powered fence of District Four. A cascade of another persona over Will that isn't himself. He could hear the distant lull of the waves on the beach daring him to give in to the pull and release to convince him to sleep. Normally, that may have worked, but tonight was different and Will could not give in to the gentle lullaby that promised a nightmare. A soft sigh escaped his lips as he twisted within his sheets. The material was scratchy but better than most you'd find in the waste. Like most things within his home, the one he had slowly been rebuilding since he was thirteen, he had to scavenge for. Some things he had taken from his childhood home before he left to hide from Peacekeepers who would've taken him to that building that barely passed as an orphanage when his father had died. However, that had been mostly clothes and fishing gear, not furniture or sheets.

Will felt something cold and wet nudge up against his foot, catching him slightly off guard. Will sat up abruptly and caught a glimpse of the copper fur of Winston, who looked at Will with perked ears and a wagging tail. Will's habit of picking up strays from early childhood followed him into his late teens and Winston was his newest addition. Once again, Will sighed softly, a faint whisper of breath, as he patted the small spot next to him. Winston was fast to accept the invitation and jumped on the bed, curling into Will. If it wasn't for the fact that summer was upon them, Will would've thought Winston had been cold, but Will knew that his dog could sense his distress and was trying to ease it in the only way he knew how. He ran his fingers through the soft fur of Winston's neck and laid his head back on his pillow.

The dog raised its head and looked Will in the eyes, the soft brown eyes staring at him was enough to pull a tender smile from him. Never had Will loved anything like he loved his dogs, the only things within his life that could not betray him or encompass his mind with their own. He gently scratched behind Winston's ear and hummed to himself, feeling more awake than he had previously. His mind would not allow him the peace of silence.

He shifted once again under the sheets and stared at the low hanging ceiling that had small cracks crawling across it like an inelegant web. Tomorrow was The Reaping. The beginning of the annual call for 24 children to be delivered to the capital and exploited fatally as a fear tactic towards the districts. Will wasn't afraid to die so by extension he was not afraid to be called as a tribute. A small part of him hoped for it, he was painfully bored in his life. There is only so much Will could do in a day that kept him away from the watchful eyes of Peacekeepers. Will made lures from the feathers, fur, or bones he found in the woods near his home and used them when fishing, some of what he caught he would eat but others he would sell for money at the small market on the outskirts of the heart of District Four. Since he was seventeen and looked more like an adult than a child, Peacekeepers weren't interested in dragging him off to the run-down orphanage. However, when he had been younger, that was not the case so Will had to go places Peacekeepers wouldn't dare venture near to sell the things he caught for the money he needed to feed his dogs and keep decent clothing on his back. Now he could go into the city with no trouble, but that lacked familiarity and there were too many people for Will's liking. He was not social and he hated how his empathy blanketed over anyone near him, making him see in the depths of things they most likely wanted to keep pushed down for all of eternity.

It is one of the reasons he hated attending The Reaping so badly, aside from the implication that The Capital owns him and his body because they have the right to send him into a death arena. Crowded into a pin of people from the age of twelve to eighteen who can't turn off their thoughts was nauseating for Will. It drenched him in their fear and crippling anxiety and left him with a horrible headache afterward. Seeing the tear streaks across the youngest of the group and the stony acceptance appear across the eldest of the group, left Will in a turbulent of emotions. He thought the whole ceremony to be abhorrent and atrocious, it made him feel like a farm animal being herded into an overcrowded pin leading to their slaughter. However, instead of his fellow peers being oblivious to their impending death, they all are painfully aware and express it outwardly in such an obvious way that Will's empathy picks up on it without his permission. He typically avoids eye contact to protect him from taking on someone's mind but when people exude their emotions like an explosion around him, it's hard to contain the painful gift he has been given.

With a groan, he sits up again and turns to look at Winston. It's obvious he is not going to fall asleep anytime soon and he does not wish to stare at his ceiling for the next six hours. He grasps the sheets and whips them off his body, shifting to throw his legs over the side of the small mattress. Winston cocks his head and Will gives him another small pet on the top of his head. He stands and makes his way to the main room of the house where his other six dogs are laid down on the soft pallet of blankets and pelts that Will made for them as one large bed. He chuckled seeing Buster laying on top of Ellie and continued to walk towards the hall that connected to the living area. With Winston following behind him, Will reaches for a pair of soft linen pants he left discarded by his front door and slips them on along with a pair of boots. He slipped his hunting knife that rested within the pockets of his pants, into the side of

his boot just in case. By now his other dogs had gotten up and joined him and Winston in the hall, watching him curiously. He smiled at them and made his way to the front door and opened it to let them out to go to the restroom. He watched in silent admiration as each dog playfully pranced in the wispy, overgrown grass that surrounded them. With a click of his tongue a few minutes later, the pack bounded back towards the house. Except for Winston, he gathered all the dogs into the house and shut the door. He looked at Winston.

“You want to go to the river, bud?” Will’s voice rumbled and was coated in exhaustion. Winston just wagged his tail and cocked his head to the side.

Will starts trekking towards the back of his house and enters the lush forest that stretched behind it. This forest is what drew Will to this place in the first place, its unusualness was a beacon to an unusual teen. District Four was the fishing district, it mainly consisted of large bodies of water, however, this forest was rare. Walking into it far enough, the border of District Four can be found marked off by an electric fence that, if it worked, was highly dangerous. However, Peacekeepers never have a reason to venture that far into the woods so they never realized that parts of the fence weren’t powered and people could slip past the wires. This is exactly what Will does when he can’t sleep or when he needs to fish alone to clear his mind. Walking twenty minutes into the woods, slipping through the wires with Winston, and then another ten minutes west brings Will to a rushing river. His safe haven from the overbearing Capital and its influence.

The river was surrounded by tall pine trees and the bank was lined with large rocks that were jagged and uneven. Every couple of steps towards the river, Will could hear fallen pine cones crunching under his feet. He picked up a few pine needles and pocketed them for when he starts a new lure. Will walks a little further along the bank until he comes upon the smooth, black rock that he usually uses as a seat when he is out here. He bends down and rolls up his pant legs and slips off his boots before sitting down and dipping his feet into the chilled water. He whistles towards Winston as a summon so he could lay down next to the rock to assure Will he wouldn’t wander off and get hurt. Will stared at the water that looks darkened in the moonlight and watches as it rushes forward. The Hunger Games were an inconvenience for him, he would have to talk to Peter to see if he can watch the dogs if he gets called and if he dies, to assign them a good home. It left a dull ache in his chest to think of leaving his dogs, they were all he had these days.

Will first started bringing home strays when his mother had died when he was ten as a last-ditch effort to comfort himself. If everything he and his dad did for his mother wasn’t enough to help her, maybe taking in strays would make up for it and help him forgive himself. Although with all the strays he has taken in, they’ve never made him feel like he was doing enough to make up for failing his mom but the dogs did make for wonderful company. Beau Graham had tried to stop his son from bringing home so many strays but gave up once he saw his son stop secluding himself in his small room in favor of playing with the dogs. It had been nice to see his son smile again. Will smiled, remembering how his father would go on walks with him and the dogs before he went to work at the docks that way he could spend time with him. At the end of the walk, his father would run a finger through Will’s stubborn curls and press a kiss to the top of his head. Will still found himself running his fingers through his hair when he sought comfort, even if it wasn’t the same. Will scowled. He missed his parents, he knows now that his mother's passing hadn’t been his fault, she was sick and no

medicine they could afford could've helped her. His father on the other hand he could've helped, he could've prevented it.

Will had wandered off from his father to go towards the Hall of Justice with Kali, one of his dogs at the time. The Hall of Justice was only a few minutes away from the hub his father was selling his daily catch for money so Beau could get more dog food. Will knew that his father was also trying to buy more supplies for supper, but he also knew what he had caught would not sell enough for them to get what they needed. He knew his father wouldn't approve, but he was going to apply for tessera, food rations offered to those who entered their names for The Reaping more than it is required of them. He had turned thirteen a couple of months ago so his name was already in the draw twice, but he would gladly put it in again just to make sure his dad could eat tonight. Beau always told him not to give in to the tessera because he didn't want his son's name in the drawing any more than it had to be. Will had a suspicion there was more to it but he didn't push.

Will walked up the steps of the Hall of Justice and turned to Kali, pointing a finger towards the ground and clicking his tongue twice. The dog immediately responded and set off to the side of the doors, where she wouldn't be in the way, and stayed so she could wait for Will. Will smiled and hummed approvingly at the blonde dog. Catching the door as someone walks out of the building, Will slips in and heads for the large desk that sits in the middle of the room. Everything was a dull gray or a blinding white, from the two split staircases on either side of the reception desk that merged on the next floor to the suspended offices on the second floor. It was a cold and unwelcoming environment, like most of what the Capital designed. It was relatively empty in the building and Will was glad, he wouldn't be gone for too long. He strolled up to the front desk timidly and examined the woman at the front desk. Her hair was comparable to that of a raven feather and her skin was a warm ochre, if he had made eye contact he would've seen honey brown eyes staring at him expectedly. He watched as she twisted the ring on her finger and without a thought touched the necklace on her neck with fondness. He sighed.

"Where do I go to sign up for tessera?" Will fiddled with the skin around his nails as he spoke, making sure his voice was loud enough to hear.

"Go up the right staircase, go towards the offices and it's the third door down," she explained politely, but her voice sounded strained and tired.

"Thank you," Will starts to walk away but turns back and looks her in the eyes, "Oh! I meant to say, leave your husband it is obvious you favor whoever gave you that necklace."

She looked up at him, startled with cheeks tinted pink. Will always knew things he shouldn't, his father had to tell him when he was six that people didn't appreciate their thoughts being broadcasted back to them publicly, but Will was a child and so curious to what would happen if he did announce their thoughts. She opened her mouth to say something but Will had already started walking to the tessera office.

Upon entering the office, Will was attacked with the image of scraggly, starving children ranging from the ages of twelve to eighteen. His inhale was sharp as he accidentally made

eye contact with a small girl whose stringy, brown hair was in a loose braid and her blue eyes looked at him with the innocence of a spring lamb. She was trembling in her stained, floral dress that hung off her small frame giving away her malnutrition. A small ache grew in Will's chest, she reminded him of the small strays he often took in with that wounded look she was giving him. She was so young, so small, so vulnerable. Unwillingly, Will's empathy blanketed the small girl.

My mother is sick and my father doesn't know what to do with me. He dresses me in dirty, ill-fitting clothes and puts little effort into the braid he's made of my hair. My appearance is of no importance to him but he dotes over my mom, wiping any sign of sweat or tears away from the pallor of her face. I am an afterthought in his mind. My importance left as soon as my mother couldn't take care of me anymore. I still want to help, maybe if I help he will notice the sweat and tears on my face. Maybe if I help, he will see me again. Maybe-

"Can I help you, boy?" A gruff voice sounded behind a desk, leaving Will to shake violently as he pulled himself out of the little girl's mind. The little girl with the eyes of a doe and innocence of a lamb. Will frowned and looked at the surly man behind the desk.

"I'm here to enter my name for tessera, just once and nothing more," Will focused on the space between the man's brows. He didn't wanna see inside this man's head. The man ushered Will forward with a flick of his wrist and grasped a hand-held device that was previously sitting on the desk. Will stalked forwards and kept his gaze on that small juncture.

The man pointed at his hand and flicked his finger in a 'come here' motion. Will offered his hand without hesitation and winced when his finger was pricked by a needle. The man turned Will's hand and placed the bleeding finger against a sheet of paper that worked as a logbook. Muttering Will's name after using a scanner to read the blood for his identification, he released Will's hand back to him. Will huffed in irritation and sucked at the tip of his finger to soothe the sting. The metallic taste was bitter in his mouth as he flattened his tongue to run over the small prick.

"Entering your name once only gets you a single serving of rations," the man informed Will. All he did to acknowledge him, was nod. One ration would be enough for him and his father seeing how it was only grains and oils. Grains and oils his father needed for supper the next few nights. This man underestimated their ability to stretch a single serving beyond one person for a single night. Why wouldn't he? Working for the Capital came with many benefits and the resourcefulness of poverty was not one of them.

Will was met with a sack of grains and a slender bottle of oil being flopped onto the counter with a grunt of distaste from the worker. He frowned at the man's open display of rudeness. What was wrong with good grains? It could be made into many things that were filling in small proportions. However, Will pushed back his irritation and muttered thanks as he grabbed his offerings and walked out of the office. All while glancing back at the small, shaking girl who had tears clinging to the rim of her eyes as she stared at Will. She was eyeing the ration he had received with hunger and Will could do nothing at this moment. Sharing tessera was forbidden and they would call Peacekeepers to remove Will and would take his rations away. He offered her a comforting smile and tried to ease her shaking as best he could with a glance. How his heart ached to help her more. But he couldn't.

Stepping back outside of the Hall of Justice, he clicked his tongue at Kali who was still waiting patiently for him. She bounded over to him happily and sniffed at the contents in his hands. He chuckled and started making his way back to the market so he could reunite with his father and show him the gift he had gotten them for tonight. Now both the dogs and them could have a wonderful meal. Will's small victory was interrupted however by a forceful hand on the collar of the flannel he had borrowed from his father. Will was yanked backward by the neck and the small boy stumbled before ripping himself out of the hold and turning to face whoever had manhandled him.

He came face-to-face with a Peacekeeper, unusual since his protective headgear wasn't on and Will could make out the anger in his beady blue eyes. The man had to be in his late forties and had strong aging marks around his eyes and mouth. His cheeks were hollow and his blonde hair was turning grey and receding. His tongue darted out as he pressed his chapped lips together. He looked to be holding back a snarl as he took in Will's small frame. Will was so confused and scared.

"Is that fucking mutt yours, little shit?" The question came out as a growl as the man bared his teeth at Will. Will's eyes flicked to Kali, whose hackles were now raised assessing the threat the man posed to the boy who had taken her in.

All Will could do was nod, fear laced onto his features. He had never been a fan of Peacekeepers, it had always felt like they were there to keep citizens in their pin rather than protect them. He tried to make himself look smaller so the man wouldn't find Will threatening. He just wanted to go back to his dad and he wanted Kali to be safe, he already suspected that she had been abused and she doesn't need to suffer at anyone's hands again. He felt the Peacekeeper hook his finger into Will's collar and drag him over to a secluded spot. Fear strangled Will as he tried everything he could to twist out of the man's grip. He was waving a hand at Kali, trying to keep her from coming closer just in case the Peacekeeper escalated the situation.

"Who do you think you are bringing a vermin-infested animal into the city, boy? Didn't your daddy teach you any fucking manners?" the Peacekeeper sneered at Will's shaking form, "If not, I guess I'll have to do it."

Will was pushed to the ground, the rations he was holding onto had tumbled out of his hand and landed a couple of feet away from him. He didn't make a noise, the man didn't deserve to get anything from Will. He didn't even look at him, knowing all the man wanted was to relish in knowing the look of fear in the child's eyes was caused by him. Will frowned and sat up, brushing the dirt off his dad's flannel. He tried his best to stop shaking and he opted for a look of indifference when he lifted his head to meet the man's eyes.

Today was not a good day at all. She left. I hit her again when I said I wouldn't and now she's gone. She knows what I'm like when I'm angry. Why can't she just accept that? She knows I don't want to hurt her, I just can't help it. That's not my fault. I feel powerless, less of a man. I need to do something.

Will sneered. He may have been raised impoverished but his Momma always told him to never lay a hand on anyone unless it was to protect himself. Especially not a woman. This man didn't see the fault in his actions, trying to blame it on his anger when in reality he just liked to cause people pain. This man looked for the littlest problem so he had a reason to be angry. Being angry meant to this man that he could hurt people. Will had no reason to fear the Peacekeeper and he thought to himself that he would enjoy watching this man fall apart.

"She told you not to hit her again, that she couldn't keep forgiving you for doing it. She told you to stop, she begged you to stop and all you could offer her was pushing the blame onto an emotion that is entirely up to you to control. Now that she's gone, who can you take it out on? Are you upset about my dog or am I just an easy target, sir?" Will's voice was cold as the metal of an unused blade and just as sharp. He watched the man wince as if he'd truly been cut. As if the slice of Will's words made physical contact with him.

Then Will saw his anger, that utter fury that etched its way into the man's brow and forehead. His eyebrows drew together, the movement rippled and caused wrinkles to form deep creases around his eyes. The pale blue eyes were now muddied with that same anger. Blood rushed to his face as his lips curled into a large snarl. Human emotions were beautiful, they are what Will's empathy used to connect with other people. But this man's fury wasn't beautiful, it was ugly and unsatisfying. Nothing about this man's fury fed Will's curiosity, as most other emotions did when he used his gift willingly. No, this fury was an empty meal and Will didn't want to waste his time anymore. He wanted to go home.

"I don't know how the fuck you know my wife but you best shut up and stop talking about things you don't know about," the Peacekeeper's voice had cracked due to the turbulent of emotion he was feeling. Will sighed, the best he could do now was buy time and hope someone found them. Even a Peacekeeper could only go so far.

"But I do know, don't I? You found out a long time ago, it might've been your mother, that you could get away with your tantrums if you appeared angry enough. Sure, you'd get yelled at or a slap on the wrist if you hurt someone else, but nothing that made you want to stop. You liked hurting people because you were hurt yourself and had nowhere to express all that agony. You started hitting and kicking others and it made you feel better. However, that agony disappeared the more you did it and now you just had a taste for it. You wanted to do it just because you could and because you knew you'd get away with it. Your wife, however, wasn't gonna let you keep getting off scot-free and you slipped up. She left you and now you don't know what to do with yourself. Now you've reverted to what you know, picking on the easy and defenseless. It doesn't make you a man, it makes you weak and a coward," Will spoke slow and stared into his eyes, making sure each blow hit exactly where he wanted to. He may not have been the strongest physically, but Will was not an easy target.

Will watched the man seethe at his words. Will had seen him for what he was and now he felt emasculated in the worst way. His pride was stripped away by a scrawny teenager and stomped on until nothing but his fury was left. Still, Will couldn't bring himself to enjoy it, he found the man too disgusting to care how much Will had affected him. He also knew buying time like this wasn't the wisest choice, the man is more likely to hurt Will now. That didn't deter him though, he wanted this man to hurt like he had hurt his wife. Will hated that the man felt justified when he put his hands on his wife and others. He thought it was atrocious

that the man believed his anger justified the response and he shouldn't be held accountable for his actions. Will would hold him accountable.

"Watch how you talk to me, I'm a Peacekeeper, I could kill you right now and all I would have to say is that you threatened me," he told Will.

"It astounds me that you don't realize the irony in that," Will started, "Once again using violence to gain the upper hand and pushing the responsibility elsewhere. It's like talking to a brick wall, should I spell it out for you?"

That sentence finally pushed the Peacekeeper over the edge and the next thing Will knows is his head is being jerked to right due to a blow to the face. It was a sudden flash of pain that dulled down to a pulsing throb on his cheek. Will let out a pained groan as low as he could. Will knew he had nothing to defend himself with so even if the man did kill him, he would have to plant Capital issued weapons on him. He knew the man would be stupid enough to do it without realizing he was incriminating himself rather than Will.

"Not up to talking anymore, kid? Well, that's alright I promised to teach you a lesson anyway and now I don't have to worry about listening to your nonsense," the Peacekeeper sounded elated, whether it was due to Will's lack of response or the fact he could cause Will physical harm was unclear. Luckily enough, the man couldn't carry through with his promise because he was interrupted by Will's father.

"Will! Oh my goodness, what are you doin' to my son?" Beau Graham was bounding towards them and waving frantically at the Peacekeeper. He didn't happen to notice the man tensing and reaching for the gun strapped to his side. Will's eyes shot frantically from the man's waist back towards his dad and his head started to shake heavily.

"Dad, no! Get back, please, he has a gun!" Will screamed at his father and tried to scramble forward. However, the only reward he got from that is the low pitched clang of a silenced gunshot. Will screamed again, watching his father drop to the ground and seeing Kali run-up to Beau.

Will sprinted to his father and heard the desperate breaths begging for relief. Will's hands shook as they came to press on the small wound on his father's chest, hoping the pressure would curb the inevitable. Blood seeped through his father's shirt and Will's fingers. Will heard himself begging his father to get up, to stay alive, to take him home but he got nothing in return as he watched the desperate gasps falter and stop altogether. Will shook his head, his father couldn't be dead, he needed him. He moved his hand from his father's chest and gripped the sides of his face, shaking it. He was pleading for Beau to wake up, but he didn't. Will gasped and let out a broken scream laced with utter agony. Tears streamed down his face as he turned to the Peacekeeper staring at them in shock, still with his gun in hand and raised, frozen.

That was the first time someone had looked at Will and had been utterly afraid of him.

He clenched his fists. The man who killed Will's father had been dead for years now but that didn't make Will's rage cool in the slightest. Will listened to the rushing water as he lost focus and his vision blurred. He drifted with the stream and was trapped by the screaming of his mind. The screaming wasn't his however, it was the screams of the outcasts of District Four, of the impoverished, of that little girl with doe eyes, and the screams of that Peacekeeper as Will forced him to take his last breath. Winston whined and Will was pulled back to reality. He hadn't known how long he had been taken by his thoughts but judging by the rising sun, it had been a few hours.

"Sorry, Winston. Let's go home, hmm? I need to talk to Peter and get ready," Will spoke quietly to the animal perched at his feet, who did nothing but cock his head. Will smiled tiredly and stood up. He put his boots back on and rolled his pant legs back down. Snapping at Winston to get him to follow, he walks back to his home. He was greeted with Peter standing on his front porch, kinda hunched over his own hands, shuffling nervously. Peter Bernardone, a small fifteen-year-old boy, was someone Will allowed to stay with him when he needed a break from his parents who didn't understand their son's condition.

"Peter?" Will called out softly, not wanting to overload Peter with too much stimulation. Peter jumped but didn't seem too startled as he looked at Will before diverting his eyes to speak.

"W-will, there you a-are. I... I came over t-to check in with you b-before the Re-reaping," Peter's voice was soft, didn't want to cause Will trouble, as he wrung his fingers. Will smiled softly at Peter.

"I meant to speak to you about that. I appreciate you checking up on me, Peter. I wanted to ask you if you would be able to take care of the dogs if I happened to get picked as a tribute. You are welcome to stay in my home whenever. You know where the key is. If anything happens to me, I would also ask that you made sure the dogs found good homes," Will didn't want to demand too much of Peter but he wanted to make sure the animals would be okay without him if that was the case. Peter didn't respond audibly but he saw Peter shake his head in agreement. He didn't think Peter would be objected but he wouldn't assume anything.

"I h-hope you are doin' okay Will, I n-need to get ready b-but I wanted to c-check up on you," Peter finally spoke. Will smiled and let Peter know he would be okay before sending him off. Will needed to get ready as well and he wanted to take his time putting that off. He unlocked the door and watched as his pack ran out to sniff him and as soon as they were done, they ran to use the bathroom. Will sighed and committed this to memory in case he couldn't return to his dogs.

Whistling to signal for return, Will walked into his home with his dogs and hurried to his bedroom. He was hoping he could take a longer bath, hoping the warmer water would release the tension stored in his shoulders and lower back. He has yet to find a better solution for the ache but his bed isn't the best support and sitting on a rock for multiple hours certainly doesn't help. He had managed to find a way to hook his home's pipes up to the city's to get hot water undetected. He had found a bathtub abandoned by the Hub and with a good cleaning and replacing a few parts, Will had gotten it into pristine shape and it was the most expensive thing he owned.

He walked into the bathroom and turned the hot water handle, holding his fingers under the running water checking the temperature. Once it started to warm up, he placed the plug in the drain and shuffled back to his room. He had two hours at most to get ready. He grabbed the tattered fabric of his towels and some boxers for when he is done in the bath. He would decide what he would wear later, he needed to think about other things right now. Returning to the bathroom, he shrugs off his clothes and sinks into the water. The tub was only half full right now but the water felt wonderful against his lower back. The water wasn't scalding, but Will knew it was hot enough to leave his skin reddened. The pure delight that crawled up his spine as he sank into the water allowed Will to finally release the tension he held so tightly in his shoulders after thinking about The Reaping and his father. He closed his eyes and watched the river of blood blackened by the moonlight flow behind them.

He didn't allow himself to doze off but he did allow himself to stay until he had only half an hour left to get ready. His hair had already started to air dry after he had washed it a while ago. The chocolate brown curls quickly became unruly and bouncy. Will huffed and stood from the bath, he quickly pulled the plug and palmed the towel laying next to him. He dries off with ease and slips the underwear he has laid out on. Making his way to the small bureau he has placed in the corner of his bedroom, he opens the drawer he has designated for clothes assigned to have a more formal function. He pulls out a white turtleneck and a black, silk button-up. Further back in the drawer he feels for a pair of grey slacks that fit a little snug in his upper thighs and ass but he couldn't afford a proper fitting so it is the best he had. He pulled the pants on first leaving them unbuttoned so he could easily tuck the white undershirt in and layer the silk shirt over it leaving a couple of the buttons open at the top. He's never been much to dress up, he preferred staying wrapped in his father's old flannels but The Reaping demanded it of citizens. He slipped a black belt through the loops of the pants. He closes the drawer forcefully only to open another for a pair of grey socks and grabs the black Chelsea boots sitting next to the bureau. He returns to the bathroom only to look in the mirror hanging above the sink so he can slick his curls back with his hands. Much to his displeasure, one curl lays popped out against his forehead rebelliously.

He knows he doesn't have time for anything else so he just accepts the fact his hair will always be unruly. He moves quickly to his front door only taking time to pet each dog and murmur soft adorations to them just in case. He pulls himself away reluctantly with a frown and makes his way out the door. The walk to the town square isn't a long one, fifteen minutes at most. He feels the nervousness of others before he sees the line. He clenches his jaw and mutters a few curses under his breath, this is already a nightmare and he isn't even within the roped-off sections. He sighs and hauls himself towards the entry line, avoiding eye contact and missing the stares cast at the curly-haired boy with the pretty face and nice clothes. He *felt* them though and he despised it. He tried to let his mind wander away from the screaming thoughts of others as the processing line moved quickly. All he could think of was the river of moonlit blood again as he found himself presented in front of a woman asking for his hand. He pushed away from the thoughts of the tessera office, as he had to each year when the woman pricked his finger and scanned his blood for identification.

Getting to his section was a blur for Will, he was unfocused, trying to escape a non-avoidable headache. He was only pulled back to reality when he heard microphone feedback from the stage in front of him. He focused his eyes on the woman in front of him. Freddie Lounds, District Four's escort and advisor. Her tumble of red curls was wrapped in a silk scarf and

what remained to be seen swooped across her forehead in thick braids. Her face was painted and ghastly white, the contours of her face were accentuated by green hues and her lips were stained olive. The obnoxiously green peplum top and pencil skirt tied the whole outfit together, especially as green and blue decorative butterflies crawled up her legs attached to vines coming from the heels she was wearing. Will scowled, he could spend an entire evening criticizing Capital fashion and it still wouldn't make this hideous sight leave his memory. From her grating voice to her terrible outfit, Will already wanted to murder and string up Freddie Lounds. Wipe her face bare of makeup, let her hair flow down naturally, and open her up to show everyone that those who belong to Capital are just as human, if not less than, as they all were. Will smiled at the thought, it shouldn't have made him as elated to visualize as it did but Will didn't deny himself the pleasure.

"Welcome! Welcome, to The Reaping that signals the beginning of the seventy-fourth Hunger Games," Freddie all but cheered as she flashed a smile to the less than joyful crowd, "As you all know, we will pick a male and female tribute to represent District Four in the arena. We will start with the ladies!"

Will listened to the click of Freddie's heels as she all but waddled towards the bowl filled with names. She so easily allows Will to entertain his homicidal thoughts without much effort or knowledge. He watches her dip her hand in and stir around before picking up the card and moving back towards the microphone. Everyone around him buzzed with uneasy anticipation and Will found himself incredibly bored and frustrated when he feels the dull ache beginning to kick up in his temple. He watches Freddie unfold the paper.

"Molly Foster," Freddie's voice rang out clearly and Will saw turning heads in the girl's section. Will frowns, that name was familiar to him. Images of a young girl with blonde hair that turned white in the sun came flashing through his mind. *Oh*. Molly was his childhood friend, who up until his mother died, kept Will afloat when he lost himself in others' heads.

He watched her walk up to the stage, her hair still so light under the sun's glare. He looked at her fondly, she looked very different from when he last saw her seven years ago. Her gaze appeared fierce and untouched, but Will saw her fear she masked. There were a small group of people that Will couldn't read, Molly wasn't one of them. He was reminded of times he spent with her at the river, where they swam until exhaustion crashed over them. Memories of messy picnics and games of tag on the beach. Will decided right there, as he replayed those memories, that he wouldn't allow Molly to die alone. Even if that meant his death and never seeing his dogs again. She didn't deserve to die alone in an arena where no one knew her or could honor her. She always pulled Will away from the edge before he shut her out and although he was now familiar with the darkness and embraced it, he owed her. She wouldn't die unknown.

Freddie had moved to the boys and did the same routine as she did with the girls. The boy she called had to have just turned twelve, the child trembled as he began to make his way towards the stage. He looked so scared and tears were already pouring down his face. If Will hadn't made his mind up before, it was made up now.

"I volunteer as tribute!"

Hannibal Lecter was bored and that was *never* a good thing.

He had been sitting on this train ever since they pulled him away from District One's Hall of Justice, after being chosen in The Reaping. All there was to do was watch the proceeding of The Reaping in the other districts. Of course, the cart had been accommodated with food he would never dare to put in his mouth and there was his co-tribute ready to converse with him if he pleased. But he didn't. Kade Prurnell had done nothing but talk since they sat next to one another in front of the projector to watch The Reaping. She was brash, loud, and *rude*. Hannibal despised the rude, discourtesy is unspeakably ugly to Hannibal. Prurnell asked questions that even a relative would hesitate before asking and she expected him to answer her. She stared at him with condescending eyes. Hannibal knew she was trying to prove she wasn't afraid of him. She sensed the predator in the room with her.

Hannibal stood, smoothing out his suit jacket. As he would wear anywhere he went, he had dawned a three-piece suit. A darker grey jacket and waistcoat paired with a burgundy button-up and paisley tie. Hannibal loved to dote on beauty and aesthetics and he would always indulge whenever allowed. Casual was not in his vocabulary or closet. He had enough of tear-stained cheeks and panic-filled eyes. Although the girl called from District Four didn't offer either, her male counterpart did. Hannibal would rather sit in his assigned bedroom and stare at a wall until they reached the Capital than watch another moment of The Reaping.

"I volunteer as tribute!"

Hannibal, who had begun walking to the door connecting the carts, whipped around. He was surprised, though no one could tell if they peered at his face, volunteers were rare from non-career districts. Especially when the volunteer said those words with spite wrapped in poisonous honey. Hannibal was intrigued, to say the least. He moved back to the small seat and Prurnell's snarky comment about him rejoining the party was lost upon his ears as the camera panned in on the owner of the voice. Now Hannibal was more than intrigued.

Smooth alabaster skin that was covered in silky black and tight-fitting greys. Rebellious curly brown hair that when sunlight touched it shined like whiskey in bright lighting and although the boy's face was masked, the rolling seas that were his eyes held storms that not even the most confident captain would sail in. That beautiful anger enraptured Hannibal as it called out to the beast that lay within him. That familiar darkness shining through like an old friend. However, much to Hannibal's surprise, it slipped away easily as the district's escort asked the young man who he was. Hannibal saw recognition within the female tribute but he didn't allow himself to dwell on it as he watched this beautiful boy come to *life*. It was like watching an actor slip into the mindset of their character, dawning that suit of characteristics.

"Will Graham," he spoke into the mic, his voice warm and rang with a low timbre. That wasn't the most dangerous thing about this boy, although Hannibal would do anything to listen to him read old poetry as he's on the verge of sleep. No, this boy was a true fisherman and he was baiting his hook. Except for the bait, the lure, was the boy himself and he was an incredibly enticing one.

"May I ask why you volunteered, Will?" Freddie was smiling like she had won a large sum of money. Volunteers in other districts made for good screen time and no doubt Freddie Lounds wanted that. Hannibal watched *Will* as he looked among the crowd and when he made direct

eye contact with the camera, Hannibal sucked in a breath. He is casting his line and Hannibal can only dream of how he is going to capture his prey, The Capital. It was fascinating watching Will Graham show a charming and confident exterior that fooled everyone and made them look at him with whimsy and dreamy stares. Boyish charm was an excellent person suit, but Hannibal was enthralled with the anger that lay beneath the facade and even a hint of boredom.

“I didn’t feel right letting a child enter the games when I have a higher chance to survive in his place. I had to do something,” Will tilted his head and feigned a hurt look. Oh, he was a magnificent creature.

“I will gladly represent our district as tribute in his place,” Will dropped the sad frown and in turn, smiled. What a dangerous thing, his smile. It was a radiant and infectious thing. Will Graham was an excellent fisherman, he just hooked his catch. Hannibal almost found himself openly gaping. He heard Kade gasp and in his peripheral, he saw a slight pink in her cheeks. An excellent fisherman indeed, Hannibal is sure the boy just won over most of the Capital and even some of the tributes it seems with a smile that doesn’t even *belong* to Will Graham. No one else saw behind the mindset Will had adopted besides Hannibal and what laid underneath was far more interesting than a borrowed personality. Darkness that fit with his own. An equal.

Unbeknownst to Will Graham, he had hooked into more than just the fish that is Panem. He hooked into the monster that is Hannibal.

Chapter End Notes

So, I'm planning on weekly updates and at most a week and a half. Besides extenuating circumstances, I will be trying my best to stick to this schedule!!!

Kerintis

Chapter Summary

Kerintis- Enchanting

"I love you as certain dark things are to be loved, in secret, between the shadow and the soul." - Neruda

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Peter came to say goodbye to Will. He was the only one. Peter came to assure Will that the dogs would be taken care of and Peter had even told him that he had to win because no home that Peter could find for the dogs could ever compare. Will left the Hall of Justice with a new determination. He volunteered so Molly wouldn't be alone and to assure the small boy's safety, but Will would make sure he returned home. He would not allow himself to die in that arena and be another death the Capital gets away with.

It wasn't until they had boarded the train that Molly had tried to speak to Will.

"Will?" Molly's voice was unsure and hesitant. He sighed.

"Yes, Molly?" His tone was nothing like hers, soft and delicate. It wasn't cruel or harsh but it lacked the warmth and recognition hers did. Entirely different from the tone he had held on stage for the cameras. Will knew that to survive the games he would need sponsors, he wouldn't get any if he acted like himself. He borrowed the personality of a boy from his school that he had found himself empathizing with when he made eye contact with him when he was younger. The boy had oozed charisma and charm, it was a perfect cover. Will was rarely thankful for his empathy, but it had its perks when it allowed him to adopt personalities. It has helped him survive on his own without his father.

"Why did you really volunteer?" she whispered.

"I wasn't going to let you die alone and unknown. You deserve more than that. Before my mother died, you helped me more than anyone else in my life. This is something I can do for you, the least I could do," he muttered, irritated. He really was not in the mood for conversation, but he wasn't going to lie to her. He wasn't looking for an ally within the arena but he would do his best to protect Molly.

“Will,” Molly let out a wounded sigh. Will shakes his head, he really didn’t want to talk anymore. That one noise was enough for Will to clam up, he did not want her gratitude or affection. They were well past that stage. It was one of the reasons he stopped talking to her when he was a child, he could always sense that he had a darkness that would hurt Molly. Will focused on her forehead, not wanting to meet her eyes, and saw her face contort as she looked as if she wanted to say something else. Will let out an impatient sigh, hoping she will take the hint and drop it. As much as Will appreciates Molly, he wasn’t interested in rekindling their friendship. She opened her mouth to carry on but after hearing Will sigh, she closed it.

The silence that had settled over them was awkward and was suffocating Will with the tension. However, Will preferred the silence over anything else at this point. He had become reclusive and shut off after his mother, especially after his father, and didn’t put much trust into other people with himself or his state of mind. They never seemed to understand him or they just wanted to use him. Luckily, the silence was interrupted by a projector turning on, located on the small table separating him and Molly. Will recognized the luxury of District One immediately. Its design was similar to the video footage he had seen of the Capital, District One still offered more color, however. They were watching a recording of The Reaping starting with District One. Will scoffed, he didn’t care who else he was sharing an arena with. They would all be dead soon, some by his own hand. He tried to feel guilty about that, but he couldn’t bring himself to. Watching the recording, however, was better than the awkward silence or conversation with Molly.

The female tribute of District One didn’t offer anything particularly interesting to Will. She was lean and toned, the muscles in her arms were displayed by the cut of her shirt and the short, cropped hair made her face seem sharper. Much like Molly, she put on a mask to cover her fear. Admirable, it was unusual though for a Career, tributes from District One and Two, to be so afraid of the Games. Especially seeing how when they are young children, Careers are sent to a specialized training school to prepare for the Hunger Games. Being a tribute is the highest honor for a Career, and most Victors come from District One and Two.

“Hannibal Lecter!” District One’s escort called forth the male tribute. Will’s eyes focused on the projector. *Hannibal Lecter*. Odd name, even for a District One tribute. Will could already imagine a brainless brute with muscles bulging out of his shirt to make up for the lack of intelligence. Will had never been so wrong in his life.

The camera panned in on a boy, a boy who reminded Will of an image of a large feline he saw in a history book called a lion. Bronze skin is highlighted by an expensive three-piece suit. It was perfectly tailored and wrapped around Hannibal much like a second skin in the most flattering ways. He walked in long, confident strides that were predatory. His hair was an ashy brunette that was slicked back expertly. Will’s eyes traveled down the expanse of his face. It was all sharp angles with outrageously high cheekbones and a strong jaw that complimented the prominence of his chin. Will thought Hannibal to be carefully sculpted out of the most expensive and beautiful marble. His lips, which Will tried to ignore how soft they looked, almost looked permanently pursed. What caught Will off guard the most was his own difficulty reading the boy. His face was a perfect mask, no obvious emotion, or even a faint microexpression. Will only saw what Hannibal was allowing anyone to see. However, Will

caught the faintest hint of something in his eyes and his empathy latched on to it, he wasn't meant to see it. But Will *saw* Hannibal.

Animalistic joy. Primal satisfaction.

Will shivered in delight. How *intriguing*. Behind the hedonistic suits and a perfectly sculpted mask, Hannibal Lecter hid his monster very well. Heat shot up Will's spine. Whereas Will's own darkness was a flurry of well-controlled impulses and roiling anger, Hannibal's seemed to hold cold wrath with god-like vindication. Hannibal gave the crowd a polite smile, charming when paired with the little nod he gave to the camera. He was filled with poise and grace. He took his place on the stage as if it were made for him. An old god amongst undeserving people. Will was incredibly amused with Hannibal's demeanor and could practically taste Hannibal's disdain for the crowd. Not that anyone else could. Will wished to hear him speak only to confirm if his voice was alluring as the rest of him. Sadly the thought was abandoned when the train car door opened and the screen switched to District Two. Will's head snapped up, he looked at Molly first. She was looking at him with curiosity and confusion. She must've seen Will's amusement as he had stared at Hannibal. He then turned to look at who entered the car with them.

"You know how to play a crowd, don't you?" a gruff voice directed at Will. He didn't meet the man's eyes and looked at his forehead. The man was tall and black, a small patch of facial hair under his lip and his brows were drawn together. Will recognized him. Jack Crawford, the winner of the Fiftieth Hunger Games and second Quarter Quell.

Will simply raised his eyebrow, he didn't have to dignify Crawford with a response seeing as his question sounded more rhetorical than anything. Crawford began to walk towards him and Molly, Will caught the hint of stagger in the man's walk. He favored his left leg, so Will could only assume that his right leg was injured. The man huffed out a laugh at Will's lack of response. He looked at the pair and Will could choke on Crawford's anger. It wasn't directed towards them, more so dealing with the fact that Jack once again had to watch children go into the arena and either one or both die. Will understood his anger perfectly.

"Jack Crawford, I'll be your mentor. Freddie Lounds is loitering somewhere on the train, lets hope she stays there, hmm?" Jack's disdain was poorly concealed and once again Will was apt to agree with him.

"I'm Molly Foster, it's a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Crawford," Molly said warmly and smiled at Jack.

"Just Jack is fine, Molly. Thank you," Jack's response wasn't as warm as Molly's but it was softer than it had been. Jack turned his head to Will, who still sat there silently. He really didn't want to socialize at the moment. Even without looking at the man, Will could feel every emotion coming off of him in waves.

"Will," his tone was clipped and he tore his eyes away from Crawford's brows.

"Listen, kid. I ain't your enemy here, I'm here to help. You did great with working the crowd, you're already big talk in the capital. Which is good, it will help you survive to charm your way to sponsors, but I've been in the games, they haven't. So, they can send a care package

to you but I'm the one who can guide you through the rest of it," Jack sounded irritated. Apparently, just like everyone else Will has ever spoken to, doesn't like his attitude when it comes to social situations. Will almost wanted to smile but he knew that wouldn't be received well either. In the end, he just sighed and nodded at Jack in agreement. It was the best he could do and he saw Molly in the corner of his peripheral looking almost pained at his lack of manners.

"Alright," Jack took the seat next to Molly and Will almost sobbed in relief, "when we get there, your stylists are gonna begin prepping you immediately for the Opening Ceremony. This will be how they introduce you to the Capital in their own environment. The costumes may be uncomfortable but I will need you to try your best to seem like you are glad to be here. Will, you've done well with how you handled The Reaping, continue to work that angle of schoolboy charm."

Will could practically hear Jack adding to that, '*It's better than your current attitude.*' He had to shove down a snort. Will looked at Molly and saw that she was staring at Jack with reverence and trust. Will hoped one day he could trust as easily as she did.

"Molly, the Capital loved how brave you looked on stage so just keep that up in the carriages. After the Opening Ceremony, the three days following will have you in the training center. Do either of you have any formal training skills with survival or fighting?" Jack is gauging their chances of survival. Will props his cheek on his hand. Molly shakes her head.

"I know how to make a fishing rod if I need to for food but I can't fight," Molly's voice shakes. Jack nods at Molly and Will can feel his gaze on him even though Will had relocated his line of sight to the blur of passing trees. Will just shrugged.

"Like Molly, I can fish if needed," he kept his responses vague, hoping to rid himself of their attention.

"That's not the only thing he can do! He makes lures himself and he is incredibly strong. He used to handle kids who would pick on his friend Peter. Never came out of the other side with a scratch on him. He also used to haul over a hundred pounds of fish to the market when he was small," Molly interjected Will and quickly came to his defense. Will turned to Molly, his face masked with indifference but he was fighting his own irritation. However, he only answers her kindness with a tight smile and a nod in thanks. She was trying for both of them.

"That's good, at least I can count on both of you being able to eat. Molly, watch the other tributes in the training center when they are sparring. However, I do not want you to show off in any way, either of you. Downplay your strengths and focus on survival skills, make yourself less of a threat. It'll help you get further in the games, the higher scoring people will go after each other out of ego and get rid of threats. They will leave who they think is weak for last. You can catch them off guard by using the best of your abilities then. Do not draw *any* attention to yourselves. Do you understand?" Jack was very serious at that moment. Will thought of his advice, he bristled at the thought of making himself look weak. He wasn't. However, he would play the part if it meant survival. He and Molly gave Crawford a nod. The tension seeped out of his shoulders as he watched them agree, probably glad he didn't have to put up a fight.

“Alright, for now, you guys need to rest. We won’t arrive in the Capital until tomorrow morning. Your rooms are in the next train cart, your name will be on your assigned room,” the dismissal was clear and Will did not hesitate to make a hasty exit. He could use the sleep anyways, his lack of it the night before was taking a toll.

Will couldn’t remember the last time he had gone to sleep and wasn’t plagued with a nightmare, let alone not dream at all. The prospect of it was unsettling at best. He woke up to the light flooding through the small window located above the bunk he was inhabiting. Even though it was smaller than his own mattress, it was still infinitely more gentle on his joints than his own beds. The sheets were navy silk, they felt as if water was running and wrapping around his limbs as he fidgeted. The rest of the room was a steel box essentially with a small chair in the corner and an overhead light. He hadn’t been allowed to bring clothes, they brushed it off by telling him that once he reached the Capital he would be bathed and dressed by his stylists. Will grimaced, he hated people touching him. Besides eye contact, physical intimacy was hard for him. The last person he had touched for longer than exchanging fish for money, was that damn Peacekeeper who killed his father. That was four years ago.

Will shifted and sat up, willing himself to be more coherent. He twisted so his legs hung over the side of the bunk and rubbed at his eyes. He didn’t know how far away they were from the Capital but he knew they were too close for comfort. He had only slept in the turtleneck and his briefs so when he hopped down he made his way to the chair he had set the rest of his clothes on. He didn’t think Jack or Molly would appreciate him strolling out in his underwear. He pulled the turtleneck off, he felt too hot and allowed the silk shirt to take its place. With two buttons undone and his shirt tucked back into his pants, he left his room and made his way back to the main cart he had been in yesterday.

To his dismay, he found Freddie Lounds in one of the chairs. Molly and Jack were at the table eating, making quiet discussion. Freddie Lounds looked up from fussing with her hair, which is slicked against her head and twisted into what seems like roses against her crown. As far as her outfit, the whites and golds almost drowned her by blending into her ghastly appearance. If not for the smooth gold and light blue contours, she would’ve been a shapeless blob of tulle and silk. Will almost didn’t catch himself in time to stop the eye roll that wanted to make itself known. He didn’t make eye contact, as usual, but he could see the beam of her smile and saw her get up to shuffle to him.

“There he is! The new charming poster boy for District Four, oh aren’t you just darling to look at? So pretty,” Freddie gushed and cooed as she reached for his hair. Will recoiled and gave her a blank stare. She stopped abruptly and frowned at him. He just ignored her as he made his way to the table, taking the seat next to Molly. Jack looked like he was biting back a laugh and Molly was practically beaming at the fact he sat next to her. Will almost went back to his room.

“I told you, Freddie, he was not as charming as he allowed himself to be on stage,” there was no malice behind the words as Jack spoke, just amusement. Will huffed, of course, he wasn’t just gonna let her fucking touch him. What did he look like? Certainly not the Capital Escort’s pet. That left a sour taste in Will’s mouth just thinking about it.

“There’s no charm at all, it’s like he’s not even the same person!” Freddie screeched. Will but his lip to hold back the smirk, he reached for a small biscuit to nibble on. He wasn’t that hungry but he knew he needed to eat something. It was almost painful to eat something the Capital was providing for him.

Will was slightly startled when his gaze met the window and he saw the beginnings of the Capital. Molly looked at him and then followed his eyes, her soft gasp was barely audible. Jack lost his amusement and his face turned grim. Will tuned out Freddie’s excited banter and saw the beginnings of the train station. He knew a lot of citizens from the Capital would be there to catch a glimpse of the tributes.

What should he do?

Obviously, he had already pitched himself into the role of a loveable and altruistic boy. He knew how to further that ploy to his advantage, although the thought alone was draining him emotionally. He had to survive though. He wanted to go home to his dogs and watch his secret river flow under the moonlight for many more nights to come. He wasn’t going to die in a government scare tactic that Will found tasteless. The only thrilling thing about the Games for Will was the chance to play the Capital like his own instrument, the music set specifically to his own tastes. The train was slowing and entering the station. Will smirked and then stood making his way to the window.

Taking on another’s mind was as easy as breathing for Will. His imagination so vivid as well as his empathy, that allowing himself into another’s mind and putting himself in their place felt natural. He thought of Cassio Rhett, the boy with endless charm, and let the pendulum swing. He closed his eyes thinking of their interactions and the mannerisms he had seen and easily imagined mimicking them. When he opened his eyes, his posture straightened and his cheeks flushed with a pink glow. He tousled his chocolate curls and looked back at Molly and Jack. He met their eyes and he could see the startled expressions. Will gave an easy-going smile and returned his vision to the window. He could see the beginnings of the crowd and his eyes became half-lidded as he lowered his head to meet their stares. He caught their eyes as the train moved at a slow pace preparing to stop. He raised his hand to wave and as he kept eye contact, he gave them an animated smile. A smile that showed nothing to the Capital but was born out of malice and primal amusement.

Hannibal had given those of the Capital a small and polite smile as he passed them. It’s all he could allow himself seeing as he was seething with irritation. He stood tall with perfect posture and walked in confident steps as he was led to the stylist’s center. He was almost impatient to be allowed a shower, the fact that he was wearing the same suit as yesterday was already grating on his nerves but the fact he wasn’t given the option of a shower left him bristled. It didn’t help that his sleep was plagued with thoughts and images of a cherubic face with chocolate curls and raging seas for eyes. Hannibal’s fingers twitched at the thought of Will Graham. He gave the outside a quick scan before he made his way into the building, with this crowd he couldn’t see catch a glimpse of Will. It almost irritated him as much as the thought of wearing the same suit twice.

The inside of the building had been exactly what Hannibal was expecting. Dull and cold, wealth and prestige do not account for taste. He once again took the opportunity to look around, however, it seemed the building had been sectioned off by districts. Hannibal assesses their section. Bathing stations with cloudy, plastic curtains surrounding them and two private rooms off to the left. Trays on rolling tables that held endless aesthetician tools for stylist's disposal. Hannibal knew he would take far less time to be worked over, he took great pride in his own hygiene and care for himself. He did however wonder what gaudy outfit he was going to be forced into for this Opening Ceremony. As the luxury district, District One tributes always seemed to be wrapped in glitter and other pompous materials. Hannibal was curious as to what would happen if he snapped the stylist's neck if they tried to put him in such a thing.

Two women came to a stop in front of him, Hannibal was mildly surprised that they lacked the usual flare of Capitol fashion. Instead, the two brunettes were in bishop styled red shirts, the only difference was one woman was wearing sailor styled black pants and the other was wearing a draped black skirt. The silk of the shirts and soft cotton of the bottoms paired nicely. Hannibal appreciated the lack of flair and found it more eye-catching than the ridiculous costumes others parade in. He gave them a polite smile and shook their hands when they were given.

"Hello, Hannibal. I'm Alana, and this is Margot, we are gonna be your stylists for the games," the taller of the two introduced kindly.

"A pleasure, Alana and Margot," he kept his tone pleasant as he studied the two women. Alana seemed softer than her counterpart, Margot held herself up straight and her shoulders were set in a tense line. While Alana's eyes held warmth, Margot's blue eyes were paled by dancing ghosts of the past. Hannibal thought she wore melancholy beautifully.

"Let me explain what is going to happen, for you," Margot spoke, "We are going to have you undress and then we are going to run through a list of things that may need to be adjusted, such as your hair, nails, blemishes. Are you all right with this?"

Hannibal gave them a nod. Nudity wasn't a problem for him, it was a natural state of being. The thought of being touched, however, made him slightly discontent. He was very careful not to let anyone too close to him, not just emotionally. He didn't want anyone to have a chance to see what he held within him. Not because of shame but because he enjoyed his freedom. However, he knew that there wasn't much that he could do in this situation other than to comply.

While they had Hannibal on the silver table, they washed him with gloved hands and discussed their plans for the opening ceremony. Based upon their current wear, Hannibal was slightly more optimistic that he wouldn't be put into a gaudy costume. While the water curled around his thigh as Alana washed him and while Margot was set to trim his hair only slightly, his thoughts drifted. If he hadn't found him so fascinating or his performance so enthralling, Hannibal might have been irritated with how much Will Graham took up his thoughts. But when thinking of raging seas, he could only feel the growing storm of intrigue washing over him. That beautiful warm rage that had seethed at the camera while being hidden behind fabricated sadness and an endearing smile, had branded Hannibal's mind like a searing kiss.

Hannibal knew if presented with the opportunity he would gladly lose himself in learning the dark pathways of Will Graham's mind. A boy whose eyes were made of mirrors that could reflect your own worst qualities made Hannibal drunk with giddy at the thought of being understood. If only he had the chance to speak with him.

"Alright, you can slip this on while we prepare your outfit," Margot handed him a thin paper gown. He kept himself from curling his lip in distaste as he slipped the scratchy cover on.

"May I ask about your design choices regarding the outfit?" Hannibal asked.

"I'll let Alana explain as I fetch the make-up I will be using," Margot gave a tight-lipped smile and turned to Alana, her posture softening and her eyes sparkled. Hannibal observed with amusement, the two women seemed quite fond of one another.

"I know you may be expecting flashy and big, but I figured what a better way to draw attention to you than being more simplistic in nature? I have designed for a white outfit, your tan will be accentuated. As for representing District One, the collar of the shirt will be a reflective gold to represent luxury and bring attention to your face. Come see," Alana explained, he could feel her own pride with the idea as he listened. Hannibal followed her to the private room he assumed he would be getting ready in.

When brought in, he could see another table like the one he had been on before and a slightly concealed closet. The rest confirmed the dull grey design he was beginning to expect from the Capital. When Alana pulled a silk white button-up that had a collar shining with gold that almost looked liquid and small vines of gold weaving through the threads near the bottom, Hannibal was pleasantly surprised. The branches of gold were only noticeable when the light hit them and allowed them to create a bright reflection. The slacks she pulled out were, as she said, a light grey that looked white at glance, and there was gold threaded through the waistline.

"Could you try this on please?" Alana handed him the outfit. Hannibal took the time to appreciate the quality of the material, the silk was light and wouldn't make him feel overheated and the pants were soft, not scratchy like some kinds of cotton. He slipped the pants on first and followed by putting on the shirt and buttoning it up. Where there would usually be three more buttons, was just blank space that let Hannibal know they wanted the shirt to be open. The shirt was slightly tight to keep the collar in a perfect position, the white flushed against his skin seemed to make his bronze skin glow against the soft hues of color. Alana smiled as she stared and gestures of it were okay for her to make adjustments, he nodded. She took care to tuck the shirt in and slightly pull at it so excess would fall over and the gold swirls of the shirt would line up with the gold on the waistband of his slacks. She stepped back and nodded to herself, returning to the closet to retrieve socks and shoes. The socks, much like the shirt, were white with gold branches creeping up and the shoes were the same liquid gold that had been hinted at throughout the clothing. While the outfit was incredibly simple, it was elegant and delicate. Hannibal appreciated the beauty of it. By the time he had put the socks and shoes on, Margot had returned with a case. She took in Hannibal.

"You look wonderful. As always Alana, you have created art, darling," Margot's tone was fond and Alana flushed under the praise. She mumbled out thanks. Hannibal gave a small

nod in appreciation for the compliment as he watched the women interact.

“Now, it’s my turn. You have very sharp features but I want to accentuate your eyes, they are the most peculiar shade of brown that needs to be appreciated. To contrast Alana’s outfit, I will be smoking your eyes with black but working gold into it. Is this alright?” Margot cocked her head. Hannibal admired the constant asking of consent, he enjoyed these two women’s company; they were a pleasant contradiction to what he had expected. He gave her a nod and followed her to the table to sit on so she could work.

He could feel the brushes fluttering across his eyelid and cheekbones. When Margot let him know she was done, he was handed a mirror. His eyes were lined with black and the harsh lines were softened and blended to make a fox an eye shape. There was a noticeable contour of his cheeks that allowed the black of his eyes to look sharper and more predator. Near his inner corner, there were flecks of gold resting there. His hair was tousled and a few pieces of hair fell in front of his eyes. Margot and Alana told him he looked perfect and he was inclined to agree as they made some last-minute adjustments.

Soon, he was instructed to follow them through a hidden door within the private room. Kade was on the other side with whom Hannibal presumed were her stylists. She was also in white and delicate gold wrappings, but the bottoms weren’t pants but a sheer skirt that accentuated her waist. The shirt was a leotard and had gold leaves flaked down her arms like sleeves. Alana nodded to the stylists in silent admiration and turned to Hannibal. She held her hand out and gestured for his wrist. He obliged and she rolled the sleeves neatly to allow for more hidden gold vines to wrap around his forearms like cuffs. He was then guided towards his chariot, tributes from District Two and Three were there already. No District Four yet, he struggled to hide his disappointment. The chariot that he would stand in was crafted out of black wood, the horses were pure white with black and gold leads and bridles.

He heard the shifting of another door and he sucked in his breath as he finally caught another glimpse of the beautiful creature tormenting him. A flared open, royal blue silk shawl that allowed Hannibal to see the toned and lithe figure of Will Graham. His skin looked devilishly soft and Hannibal longed to touch so he could store the sensation in the vast expanse of his memory palace. His mid-section was wrapped with delicate netting like a thick belt to represent the fishing district and he was wearing palazzo-style white pants that when he walked, flared gracefully with his strides. When the pants flared, Hannibal saw the fishing twine wrapped around bare feet and ankles. Will’s hair was in charming disarray with chestnut curls fluffed. Hannibal almost purred at the sight, Will looked so deliciously delicate with his flushed cheeks and glossed lips. His lower lash line was smudged with orange hues and black that made his blue eyes glow. However no matter how delicate and almost angelic he looked, Will carried himself like a wolf in sheep’s clothing. A true predator ready to disarm his prey with soft looks and touches waiting for the opportunity to strike. Hannibal openly admired the boy.

Almost as if he sensed Hannibal’s gaze, Will’s eyes lifted, and looked around before catching Hannibal’s. His lips parted and his eyes widened the tiniest amount before he schooled his face back to a blank slate. When back in his room later that night, Hannibal would wish for a drawing pad to draw Will’s parted lips and doe-like eyes. Hannibal was almost caught off guard when Will’s eyes shone with open fascination. Will’s eyes were the only thing showing

emotion and no one surrounding him seemed to be able to see it, but Hannibal *did*. He was greedily drinking in Will and any emotion he would give him. He watched as his eyes became half-lidded as his gaze swept over Hannibal from head to toe, getting caught on the hair swept across his forehead and his bare forearms wrapped with gold. Hannibal itched to walk over and touch the tempting boy and derailed when he saw a pink tongue swipe along those teasing lips. No one had ever tempted Hannibal's self-control so easily as Will Graham had and was pleasantly surprised to see that Will was also slightly stirred. He welcomed this new feeling with a reverent fondness which was a surprise. Hannibal had got so lost in Will's gaze he hadn't noticed the other tributes had flooded in. It was only when Hannibal saw in his peripheral another admiring glance that was being thrown at Will, did he break his gaze, almost immediately wanting to return.

A few feet behind him was a boy slightly taller than Will, wrapped in pelts that gave away his belonging to the livestock district, Ten. He was staring at Will in fierce hunger and open desire. Hannibal almost snarled and his blood thrummed hot under his skin.

He knew who he was going to kill first in that arena.

They were practically eye-fucking one another.

When Will had felt his skin crawl due to being stared at, he expected it to be an angry tribute, not maroon eyes lined with smoke that sparkled with intrigue and something darker. He met Hannibal Lecter's eyes with unnatural ease for Will. Nothing for his empathy to latch on and overwhelm him with besides the small wisps of attraction and interest. Emotions that Will mirrored easily without his empathy or permission. His heart raced and even though he forced his face back to an emotionless state, Will was feeling *everything*. Those maroon eyes were sinfully addicting to get lost in, especially when something darker was beckoning for him to approach. He knew he couldn't, but fuck did he want to walk right into the arms of the beast. He swept his gaze over Hannibal. The soft fringe covering his black-lined eyes made him look devilishly handsome and Will wanted to run his fingers through his hair to see if it was as soft as it looked. His eyes lowered over Hannibal's outfit, white and gold, making Hannibal seem much more divine than Will had already pictured him to be. The white stark against beautifully caramelized skin and hints of chest hair sticking out had Will's mouth-drying. Will's breath caught at the sight of his shirt sleeves rolled up around his forearms. Will could barely keep himself from flushing with strong desire. He had no doubt what Hannibal Lecter was capable of, he swiped his lips with his tongue and returned to look at Hannibal.

Fuck.

Hannibal's eyes had darkened significantly and even though he remained seemingly calm and poised, Will saw the tension settling beneath his skin. Hannibal didn't seem the type to be affected so easily, if Will wasn't trying so hard to keep himself from walking up to the boy he would've been amused greatly. The claws beneath his skin wanted to sink into Hannibal's flesh and Will's mouth wanted to consume him. His breaths were becoming shallow and he knew he really needed to avert his eyes, but he didn't too. He was preening under Hannibal's attention and was terribly off-put by the idea of removing himself from it. That thought alone

almost had him ripping his gaze away out of spite, he didn't *want* Hannibal's attention or interest. Hannibal probably wasn't as interesting as Will thought him to be. He was probably just another Career who couldn't hold an intelligible conversation if he tried.

But Will knew better. He knew he was lashing out against these new and unwarranted feelings. He also knew that he had never been wrong when reading someone, even if Hannibal gave him barely anything to read. There was something very different about Hannibal that Will found likeness in. How the boy blended so well in the crowd while carrying something feral and animalistic around with him. However whereas Will blended and disappeared, Hannibal confidently stood out and drew attention to himself effectively charming anyone who had doubts. Complete opposites, so why did Will feel as though he could know him as well as he knew himself if he allowed it?

Will felt cold when Hannibal removed his gaze, snapping Will back to the reality of his situation. He watched the warm molten pool of amber turn to hard obsidian as anger shook Hannibal when his eyes found what had interrupted their stare-off. Will wanted to bathe in this cold fury that Hannibal was exuding, it was gorgeous. Will followed his gaze and almost slipped into the same state Hannibal had been in. Green eyes, darkened with lust and want, were roaming over his figure and Will shivered in disgust. His skin was crawling and he wanted to rip this man's eyes out.

"Will? Are you okay?" Molly touched his shoulder and Will towards her quickly, effectively wrenching himself out of her hands. He tried not to be too surly towards Molly but a physical touch from her burned, his skin sensitive to a soft caress he had not felt in years. Not only that but it felt *wrong*.

"I'm fine, Molly. What are you talking about?" he felt breathless from Hannibal's anger, so different from the almost fond look he had received but welcomed all the same.

"You looked ready to burst at the boy from District Ten who was staring at you. I admit it's creepy but you must calm down Will, he can't touch you," Molly softly reassured him.

"Yeah, I get that Molly," he said sharply, "Doesn't mean I want him staring at me."

Molly recoiled at his room and she frowned. Will sighed, softening his gaze from the glare. He felt bad, Molly meant well and was just trying to soothe him. The boy from District Ten had put him on edge, the gaze was bordering on possessive. His fingers twitched and he rubbed the soft material of his blue shawl. He thought of the silken flow of blood between his fingers as he rubbed the material and imagined the blood belonging to lifeless green eyes. The image immediately brought a flow of primal need through his blood. To prove himself to be superior over this man who seemed to think he could *own* Will with his gaze.

"I'm sorry, Molly. That was rude of me, I appreciate it, I do but he is making me nervous," he exaggerated to her with pleading, innocent eyes. He was being manipulative slightly but he wanted to keep Molly at arm's length, not wanting to expose her to his homicidal tendencies.

"It's okay, Will. I understand," she gave him a bright smile thinking that he had decided to trust her once again with this offered information. He nodded and turned his gaze back,

catching it on Hannibal's figure once again. His body warmed and he saw Hannibal's lip flicker up into a slight smile when he returned to Will's gaze.

"Will, stop having eye sex with District One and get in the chariot!" Jimmy Price called out to him with a hearty laugh. Jimmy Price and Brian Zeller were an eccentric pair. Constantly picking at him with brotherly affection and doting on one another. He was glad they picked such flowy materials and didn't overwhelm the look with fishnet. He rather liked the flared white pants and Brian had told him when he first saw him that Will was an 'angelic canvas for them to elevate'. Will turned to Jimmy and flushed brightly. He just shook his head at him with a glare and Jimmy cooed at him and fluffed his shawl. Will gladly took his hand for help into the chariot. He listened to Brian talk him through what was gonna happen to tell him to stand there and look pretty.

He stepped back into the mind of Cassio and gave Brian a charming smile for reassurance. Brian laughed and slapped Jimmy in the shoulder, pointing at Will. Jimmy took Brian by the waist and led him away from the chariots, giving Will and Molly a wave. Will smiled after them and felt the tug of the chariot pulling forward.

The crowd was overwhelming for Will, he felt the high turmoil of emotions from the Capitol. They were cheering, he heard them before they even pulled through the archway. However, when Will came through, they *screamed*. He kept himself composed even though his head was pounding and in searing pain from the emotions he was feeling. He flashed a charming smile and raised his hand to wave. He caught several of the citizen's eyes and ducked his head in pretend bashfulness. He flashed winks at several teenage girls and watched their cheeks fill with rosy pink hues under their makeup. He *had* to win these people over in hopes of sponsors.

The chariot pulled around and he saw Hannibal smiling with sharp fangs and charming decadence. His face was flushed and his hair was ruffled but his eyes were unforgiving. Will shivered with delight and flashed him a predatory smile, enjoying the way Hannibal's jaw tensed and his pupils expanded, blowing out with desire. The same desire the District Ten boy gave Will but this didn't make his skin crawl, it shot sparks up his spine and through his fingertips. He couldn't wait to sink into the mind of Hannibal Lecter. Something uncommon for Will.

The chariot stopped and above Will could see the three-piece black suit covered by a brown fur coat belonging to the President of Panem.

Molson Verger.

Will almost growled and his hand that was holding onto the side of the chariot tightened. His knuckles blanched and he ground his teeth. The President approached the podium.

"Welcome!" He called over the roaring crowd, waiting for them to hush. Once they did, he gave a smile that chilled Will to his core.

"Welcome," he called again, "to the seventy-fourth Hunger Games!"

His tone was void and Molson scanned the tributes, stopping momentarily on Will. He took the opportunity to glare back at him defiantly. He watched the fury spark in Molson and that satisfied Will intensely. The feeling of being watched was returning to Will as Molson moved onto the other tributes, delivering some god- awful opening speech. Will turned and saw Hannibal staring at him with feral pride. Hannibal had seen his act of defiance towards their President and *liked* it. How could Will ever doubt his intuition about Hannibal? Especially when Hannibal looked like he could eat him up just for making eye contact with someone.

Will sent Hannibal a wink.

Chapter End Notes

I hope y'all enjoyed it!! You will come to find throughout this fic that Will and Hannibal are insatiable when it comes to staring at each other.

Žiūrėti- pt.1

Chapter Summary

Žiūrėti- See/Watch

“By night, Beloved, tie your heart to mine and let them both in dreams defeat the darkness”- Pablo Neruda

Chapter Notes

I apologize for being absent from last weeks update, I was on vacation with my mom after finals week. I will be trying to get out part two to this chapter on the 25th as a gift to make up for it!!! This was originally going to be an 11k chapter but I split it up for the holidays. I hope you guys enjoy <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Hannibal had never met someone as intoxicating as Will Graham, someone who made him lose his control so easily. What a magnificent boy he was in his entirety. Pale limbs draped in blues and silk were burned into his eyelids whenever he blinked. Oh, how he ached to draw Will.

The Opening Ceremony itself was a terrible bore. Molson Verger’s speech about the Games had been nothing short of arrogant and condescending where the tributes were concerned. Well, at least it was before Will openly glared at Molson. His gaze holding Molson down like pins would hold down a butterfly’s wings for display. Openly accusing Molson, without much care for who was watching, although it seemed only Hannibal and Molson noticed. Will had charmed the Capital so thoroughly they were too busy gushing to look closer. Watching Will in his defiance had been nothing short of a delight for Hannibal. Especially since his mind was still hazy from the predatory smile Will had given him. The person suit he had crafted for the Capital all but vanished when faced with Hannibal, and Hannibal was drowning in satisfaction at the thought. Not only that but seeing Will so openly display his monster to Hannibal was almost as if he was *teasing* Hannibal.

He knew that’s what Will was doing when he sent Hannibal a wink after catching his gaze. Hannibal was so transfixed on Will Graham and he knew it wasn’t wise. However, there was an opportunity here that Hannibal knew he would never find again. He wanted to see the angel that Will Graham made himself out to be for the Capital succumb to the fall from righteousness and bathe in the blood of those who dared to underestimate him. Hannibal had never been one to daydream but it was an image he found himself returning to wistfully. He

wanted to be correct in his assumption that Will could be his equal, could see and understand him. He never felt lonely in his solitude but ever since he caught a glimpse of blue eyes and flushed skin, he now finds his most recent memories to be dipped in that lonely sensation.

He was escorted back through the Remake Center after the chariots returned to the hall, to the ground level apartment for District One. He watched as Will was escorted to the elevators and briefly caught his eyes once more. Those eyes that were hardened in annoyance due to whatever his mentor had been drilling him about were lost when they met his gaze and Hannibal added the soft look he was given to his growing collection of Will Graham images. The tension bled from his shoulders and he diverted his attention back to the hall in front of him as the elevator doors closed breaking the eye contact. He didn't pay attention to his company until he heard Kade's *abhorrent* mouth start to run.

"That boy thinks he's such hot shit, he's gonna be dead as soon as he steps into that arena. What does it matter if he's *pretty*?" Her tone was sharp and Hannibal turned his attention to her. His fingers twitched.

"May I presume you are talking about the tribute from District Four?" Hannibal kept his tone polite, unlike Kade, even as the beast beneath his skin was longing to snap her neck for the threat of Will's death. He may not have spoken to him just yet but Hannibal trusts his observation in finding an equal within him so Hannibal can already feel the creeping possessiveness directed towards Will start to settle.

"Yes, who else has the Capital practically on its knees with just a fucking smile? Don't think no one else caught you two staring at each other like you wanted to eat one another. He doesn't deserve the attention of a Career tribute, don't give it to him," she seethed.

"As much as I appreciate the *concern*," Hannibal said in thinly veiled sarcasm, "I believe I control what I do with my body, not you Ms. Prurnell. If I wish to indulge and look at something I consider beautiful, then I will. As well as it is not my place to determine what others deserve, it is not yours either. Especially when trying to use it as a way to tell me what to do with my time."

Hannibal's face stayed perfectly blank as he held onto his politeness and poise, trying to satiate the anger that was begging to be unleashed onto her. Kade was adding to her lists of offenses against Hannibal and even to a new category Hannibal has made for unacceptable rudeness, *against Will*. Kade gaped at him as he gracefully put her back in her respectful place. She didn't have anything to say after that and quickly scurried to her assigned room within the apartment when they had arrived.

The living area was filled with colorful plush furniture that attacked Hannibal's eyesight. His idea of decoration were darker accents and rare pieces that might make guests mildly uncomfortable to his amusement, while still being tasteful. He did, however, appreciate the fireplace that was framed by two love seats with juniper cloths with a cherry wood frame and a larger mossy colored leather sectional. It has black bricks with grey grout and the wood was already within the hearth, waiting to be lit. The carpet that was draped under the loveseats and sectional was a cream color that had a paisley pattern, the color scheme within the room shouldn't work but it was pulled together in that ostentatious manner that only the Capital could pull off. The floor plan of the apartment was open, with not many walls to separate

rooms besides the tribute's rooms being closed off with a door for privacy. There was no kitchen, just a dining room. Hannibal had to shove down the flare of irritation. He was used to being able to make his meals, the creative freedom and his unique dietary supplements gave him a passion for the culinary arts. It seems he would have to temper his wants and routines for the Games, not even being allowed to dress himself, he surmised from him not being allowed any luggage, or cook for himself.

The dining room was toned down compared to the living area. The area was slightly elevated on a platform that was an inch step up from the rest of the floor plan. The walls were a color comparable to that of a dove's feather, a pearly grey. The teak wood of the dining table was covered with a white table cloth that was already covered with hot and ready food.

It must have been prepared while the Opening Ceremony was taking place, Hannibal thought to himself, amused. Interaction with citizens of the Capital, even servants, was limited for tributes besides events sanctioned specifically for the Games. He looked over the spread of food, interested in what he was being served. He would most likely be dining alone seeing as Kade had scurried off after his chiding and his mentor, Chiyo, was surprisingly elusive.

The spread would seem fairly complicated, but to Hannibal, it was tame in comparison to his usual decadent meals. A porcelain bowl of pureed vegetable soup, which was seemingly cold, eight small dishes of fish cakes with a creamy sauce were decorated around the main course. A large platter of smaller roasted creatures stuffed with an orange sauce laying on a bed of rice and grains. The presentation was pleasing enough to Hannibal's critical eyes. He sighed and took a seat in a cushioned dining chair.

There was an arrangement of enough placemats for him, Kade, and his mentor to sit down and eat together if they pleased. As soon as he took a seat, a hidden door slid open, and out stepped what Hannibal surmised as a Capital servant, an Avox. She was dressed in a garish red with a red choker to accompany the uniform, a brand, or a collar. Her mousy brown hair was expertly swooped into a bun, slicked down so no fly-aways or imperfections would be detected. Her gaze was located down at her black mary-janes. Hannibal's lip quirked slightly, trying to frown. Everyone had heard the rumors that servants within the Capital weren't truly employed but sentenced to a life of servitude for disrespecting or acting out against President Verger. Tasteless.

He thought of Will.

"Pardon me," Hannibal spoke to catch the woman's attention. Her eyes snapped up to his, mocha eyes met maroon. She looked at him expectantly, not speaking. He also had heard the rumors of said servants losing their tongues at Verger's hand. Vulgar.

"May I acquire your assistance on a particular matter?" He asked politely. She nodded once, an answer.

"Would there be a possibility of you fetching a sketch pad or paper and a few graphite pencils for me, please?" The woman blinked, either she didn't expect the polite cadence of Hannibal's voice or his request. Perhaps both. Nevertheless, she nodded and walked back through the sliding door. He smiled to himself and started to plate his dinner. He set a couple of cakes off to the side and instead of eating the vegetable puree as soup, he artfully drizzled

it over the fish cakes and arranged a few stuffed pheasants in the middle so the orange sauce would flow onto the rice he placed beside them freely. If he couldn't make his meal, he could at least arrange it to his standards. The meal wasn't harsh on his palette but Hannibal could taste the slight dryness of the meat, the tangy nature of the orange sauce overpowered the vegetable puree, and the flakiness of the cakes didn't allow the flavor to enrich the cake and just distributed the spice unevenly.

By the time he had finished, the woman had come back. A reasonably sized sketching journal and four graphite pencils grouped together with an eraser with a red ribbon. He thanked her and gave her a little bow with his head, taking the items and handling them with utmost care. He had pocketed a rather sharp knife from the table in case he was graced with pencils to sharpen them with. Seeing as he wasn't given access to a scalpel, his usual tool to sharpen his pencils. As soon as the items had been handed off, the woman began clearing his plate leaving him to carry himself to one of the loveseats. Particularly the one where he could face his and Kade's room so if she did exit her room, she couldn't nose around in his work and go on another annoyingly graceless tangent.

He still hadn't changed out of the outfit he had been graced with for the ceremony but that was not at the top of his priorities at the moment, it wasn't anywhere near late evening so he had time to shower and change. Hannibal made quick work of the fireplace, wanting for the familiar comfort the warmth of the flames would bring him as he sketched. He settled into the cushions and crossed his right leg over his left to use as a prop for the sketch pad once the fire had been started. The surface area of the paper was enough for him to break one page into three distinct areas for the three images that he wanted to draw as urgently as possible.

The first was centered in the top left corner of the page. His shading was light, a tiny caress against the page as his pencil strokes started coming to life and forming the soft lines and sweet features of a borrowed smile. He took careful strokes to capture the radiance of Will Graham. The smile was charming and breathtaking, something that overcame Hannibal with inspiration. That had been the first image of Will he had wanted to capture on paper. He moved from the working of Will's jaw, mouth, and nose up to make the outlines of his eyes. Features that were quickly becoming Hannibal's favorite thing about Will. While the smile looked genuine to anyone, Hannibal wanted to capture the daggers in his eyes that had been directed at the Capital, so neatly hidden under a cooling pool of cerulean iris'. A storm of decadent fury framed by thick black lashes and lifted eyebrows. Hannibal stared at the image forming, *perfect*. He took just as great care as he did with the rest of Will's face as he did with his beautiful chocolate curls. While sketching the slicked-back portion was relatively easy, Hannibal found a pleasant challenge in rendering the one rebellious curl that had laid against Will's forehead correctly. Staring for a few moments at the sketch, he recalled how it had flopped over his left brow, brushing over his lashes. He put that image to the paper with one of the other pencils, he had switched the softer graphite for one that would produce a darker and rougher texture.

Finished with the first image, he moved to the bottom right corner and recalled the look he had first been given from Will at their eye contact within the Remake Center. Blue eyes sparkling with interest and an open curiosity, flushed cheeks that filled his alabaster skin with rouge hues, and parted plump and soft lips that had inhaled sharply. He switched back to the same pencil that gave the sketches a softer, more demure look to capture Will's expression.

He traced his finger over the rough outline of his cupid's bow with a soft sigh. He wished momentarily he had chalks or watercolor to capture the blush that overtook the soft planes of his cheeks or the gloss of his lips as he moved on throughout the sketch. He once again took great care to softly map out Will's eyes and their soft affection as they started to stare back at him. He distantly acknowledged the fact that Kade had exited her room to dine while she tried to discreetly stare at Hannibal, trying to figure out what he could possibly be doing with a sketch pad. He disregarded her stares and ignored her presence with little difficulty. He was much too focused on capturing the charm of Will's wild curls, another feature he favored, to pay her any attention. He caught himself smiling fondly at the image when it was completed. Both pieces in the corners were bust pieces and he had a more ambitious project for the third image he wished to produce, a full-body image.

The third piece wasn't an image Will had produced for Hannibal but one he inspired with a feral smile and burning glare and was meant for the center of the paper. He started with mapping out Will's proportions from the memory of him at the Remake Center, his figure was lithe but not weak. He could see the soft contours of muscles in his arms and stomach, draped in blue. *Beautiful*. Since he didn't know what the arena would hold he did not aim for any certain degree of outdoor wear and kept Will shirtless in the white palazzo pants. He switched back to the harder graphite pencil as he etched Will's coy and dangerous smile onto his face and his furrowed brows over his bright, joyful eyes. He used the darker graphite pencil to map out the splatters and flow of blood, dripping off Will's left palm and curling down his right forearm as gravity pulls it down from the hand tugging through his own hair. Sprays of blood cover his torso in artistic splatters and Hannibal creates slight shadows around the outline of Will's body so the space between his body and the shadows create an angelic glow around Will. What a vision his boy is in the moonlight covered in shadowed blood with a grin that signals his enjoyment.

Will Graham's becoming, Hannibal thinks to himself with a surprisingly soft affection he didn't think himself capable of anymore.

With a final longing stare at the sketch, he closes the book carefully and rewraps the pencils with the red ribbon. He doesn't quite know how long he had been sitting but he quickly determines it was a few hours after making his way to his bedroom. The bed had the same cherry wood as the loveseats but is complemented with a black velvet duvet instead of juniper colored linen. He pulls back the duvet and almost vibrates with concealed joy. His sheets are an icy cerulean, how the Capital has given him such a treat without realizing it. The bed was much like the dining room table, on a platform an inch above the original flooring. Besides the bed, there is a dresser and nightstand, also made with the same stained cherry wood. On his nightstand, there is a curved screen. He sets his sketchbook and pencils down and picks the screen up. In front of him was a large wall taken up completely with a window facing a downward slope of the Capital. He could see the city was coming alive with dusk falling upon them, Hannibal's answer to what the time was. He knows the device in his hand functions as a remote of sorts for the glass of the window that hid its purpose as a screen. He had seen many of them within the shops of District One as he perused the markets for his own home. He swiped his thumb in an upward motion and watched the small screen light up and the glass of the window fog over. He swipes up again, *Seventy-Third Hunger Games Arena*. He looks up. A barren wasteland stares back at him and he can imagine the blistering heat upon his shoulders as he watches the dry vegetation crumble under the sun.

This arena had been especially brutal for last year's tributes, he had watched of course in amusement as the usual time it took for the games to play out, around two weeks, finished within five days. Most due to the harsh exposure, but others to the Victor of the games who had decided that instead of allowing themselves to die from the heat, to kill anyone they came across with a brick. Another key feature of the arena had been the crumbled buildings surrounding the barren desert. Hannibal enjoyed the theatrics of the Game Makers last year immensely. He tore his eyes away and swiped up once again *Seventy-Fourth Hunger Games Arena*. He looked up and he blinked.

Snowy pine and redwood trees and a flowing river in between them, snow-blanketed river bank.

How interesting.

He opened his eyes.

Will was leaning against a rock and was faced with the familiar flow of his river at home. His heart ached as he closed his eyes again to take in the sounds of the rushing water. The feeling of being stared at returns to him, it is familiar to him and doesn't make his skin crawl the way it usually would. His eyes flutter open and he looks across the river to see a figure staring at him from the opposite bank of the river. The figure is large and imposing, obsidian flesh barely covering the bones underneath. It's ribs were easily seen and it's collarbone jutted out. The famished look does not give the creature a weak look, rather adds to making it even more terrifying. Although fear isn't particularly what Will is feeling at this moment. The creature's head was adorned with a crown of large antlers, branching out and reaching towards the canopy of trees. There was a flash of ivory at the base of the antlers but it was quickly faded to charcoal black. It's face was sharp and angular and stared at Will with dark eyes. Something behind it caught Will's attention, a stag. Will could make out it's pelt and how peculiar it was. Raven feathers wrapped around the stag's neck and faded to fur at it's shoulder. It made careful and precise steps towards the creature staring at Will, not cautious nor afraid. Merely taking in the creature before it. The creature, Will quickly compared it to something he had read in a forbidden text he had stolen from the library on the Old World's myths, something called a Wendigo. It turned it's head to look at the stag and smiled. Razor-sharp teeth would give others a warning to stay away but Will didn't feel threatened anymore now than he did when he first caught the Wendigo's stare. The stag seemed to reach the same conclusion and gave a nod to the creature. The stag felt oddly related to Will in a way he wasn't ready to analyze.

The Wendigo's stare had returned to Will and he suddenly felt the urge to approach as the stag had done before him moments ago. He rose to his feet, without breaking eye contact in a trance-like state. He didn't have shoes on, just soft linen pants and no shirt. The air was humid and warm around him so it didn't bother him to be so dressed down. His feet moved with their own agenda, pressing forward in small steps towards the water. He didn't know why he had a fascination to be within reach of the Wendigo's clutches but he also knew he was in no danger. He felt the cool water brush over the tips of his toes before he felt a tugging at one of his pants legs. He lets out a confused noise and breaks away from his stare with the

creature to turn around. Behind him is Winston, Will lets out a slight whine at the sight of his most loyal dog. He misses his dogs and seeing Winston leaves a fierce ache within him. He arches a brow as Winston tugs at his pants to pull him away from the river. Will turns his head to look back at the creature, it looks expectant and waiting. He's waiting for Will and Will wants to go to him.

"Winston, let go. The river isn't that deep nothing will happen to me," Will speaks softly tugging at his pant leg. But Will has misinterpreted his dog's worry, Winston isn't cautious because of the water. He is cautious because of the Wendigo, staring at it before looking back at Will and unconsciously barring his neck in submission. He feels the presence of an apex predator and knows when to back off. Now he is doing the same to Will, telling him to back off and be careful. Will frowns, the Wendigo won't hurt him, he's curious. Will knows because he can feel it, there is nothing his empathy can grasp that is threatening. Plus, the stag isn't threatened. Why should he be?

He shakes off Winston's grip on his pants and wades into the water. He has recaptured the creature's gaze and it's eyes are dancing with mirth and excitement, it's happy Will still wants to approach him even with his animal's warning. Will can't shake the familiarity he feels with the Wendigo, it's gaze reminds him of someone but everything is too hazy right now. The stag was also looking at Will, with the same expectant stare. He waded into the water until he was about calf-deep before he was stopped by a soft hand on his wrist. He watched as the Wendigo's eyes shifted to the touch and the warmth was drained and replaced with burning jealousy. He too wishes to touch Will but he's too far away. Why do they keep getting in Will's way? He doesn't want the creature angry with him, he misses the bright curiosity in the Wendigo's eyes. He whips his head to his right and finds the face of who grabbed him, their touch burns, with a fierce glare.

Molly.

"Molly, what are you doing? Let go," Will looked at her confused and tugged at his arm. Her grip was firm and his skin was starting to itch at the contact. She looked at him with her sad blue eyes.

"Will, why are you going towards it? You know what it is, please stay away," She pleads him. She starts to position herself between him and the Wendigo. The monster he has locked in a cage within him is snarling and rattling at it's bars. Like an animal being held back from it's mate. He sneers at her.

"What are you talking about, Molly? It isn't gonna hurt me, it's just curious. What has got you so worked up?" He spits at her, losing his soft tone and his anger is winning over the friendly affection he holds for her. She looks wounded.

"Will, it kills people. That's wrong, why would you want to go to it. Are you okay with that? What happened to you? You used to be such a sweet boy, my best friend. My sweet boy who always protected me," her voice is barely audible over the sound of the rushing water. Will can feel the Wendigo's anger rolling off it in waves and almost gasps at the possessive emotions his empathy sleuths out. It feeds the fire of Will's wrath.

“Why should I care, Molly? You don’t know me anymore, I left you a long time ago. I am no longer your business so leave me alone,” Will was shaking with his and the creature’s anger. He knew he should care that the Creature murders people. However, it isn’t human itself, it almost seems above humanity, so is it really murder? Would Will really care if it was a human standing before him with the same stare and presence as the Wendigo being accused of the same atrocities? It would make him hypocritical after all, if he did. Will had turned more or less morally grey after the death of his father and even though he still struggles with society’s perception of right and wrong, he knows he is long past the morally white and black. When he lies awake at night in his raggedy bed, he often feels bothered by his straying morals. He always knew there was something off about him, he felt it within him. He hated eye contact because of what he could see in people but also the possibility of what they could see in him. Why was it so easy for him to stare into the eyes of the Wendigo when everything about it contradicts the look of humanity but it’s gaze feels nothing but human?

“Will-“ she doesn’t get to finish because Will gives her a harsh shove into the water. He couldn’t take any more of her prying questions and he wanted her to stop touching him. He wanted her to go away and just let him get to the Wendigo. How dare she assume that it was bad? Suddenly the cage around his beast doesn’t feel so secure. Molly dissipates under the water and flows down the river.

He looks back up and sees the satisfaction displayed in the Wendigo’s eyes, it’s anger being placated by Will getting rid of the perceived threat. Will’s shoulders sag in relief, he doesn’t know exactly why he is so eager to please the creature. It just seems to know Will though, know everything, see-through him, and still be interested in what he has to offer. He often ignored the lonely feeling he gets, brushing it off, and spending time with his dogs. He knew that he had done things he couldn’t possibly tell another person. He felt as though his whole life he will go by making relationships with people and only showing the parts they want to see. No one wants Will Graham in his entirety. The only other time he has felt a stare as understanding and penetrative as the creatures was when he caught Hannibal’s eye in the remake center. Hannibal just seemed to know.

Hannibal.

He stares at the Wendigo, he hadn’t realized he started wading back towards it. He was almost waist deep now. The river wasn’t very wide so now he could see the creature a lot clearer than before. It’s gaze was still curious, still expectant, still satisfied but now Will could make out the hidden affection and possessive glint.

Hannibal.

Will wasn’t processing the information or connecting the dots within his dream and he wouldn’t until much later.

“Son, stop.”

The voice halted Will’s movement and his body let out a violent shudder as his hand made its way to his mouth to stop the whimper from escaping. There was no mistaking that voice. His eyes flitted between the stag and the Wendigo, tears pricking his waterline as his heart was racing. The Wendigo looked confused at Will’s agony and while part of it looked like it

wanted to enjoy the beautiful pain across the boy's face, it too looked pained at Will's emotions. Especially since it couldn't do anything at all to help. The voice of Beau Graham had stopped Will in his tracks and left him trembling as he did when his father had died. He didn't want to turn around this time. It hurt so bad.

"Son, Will, look at me," Beau called from behind him. His voice sounded distant like he was feet away but somehow close like he was standing directly behind him. Will's eyes blinked rapidly and tears started flowing freely. He looked to the Wendigo in a silent beg, a plea to save him from facing this. The Wendigo looked lost as Will was begging him for relief. It looked pained.

Will sucked in a breath, the creature's pain was unbearable for Will, he couldn't stand it. He'd rather face his father than that lost expression. His body was shivering as he turned around, a quiet scream leaving his lips as he took in the appearance of his father. He looked the same as the last saw him in that alley. He hadn't even been able to give him a proper burial, he had to drag him to a meadow and laid him amongst the wildflowers. It wasn't until after he laid his father down that he took his time to unleash his vengeance on the pig that had killed his father. Beau Graham stood there, distressed jeans soaking under the rolling water of the river, his white tank top was soaked red and his blue work shirt was flared open, swaying in the slight breeze. Will's breath caught in his throat.

"Daddy?" Will's voice was soft and came out with the slight drawl that he had always worked so hard to cover up. He didn't like the attention that came with it. Beau looked him over, his mouth set in a firm line.

"Will, what're you doin' with this thing? I taught you better than this son, your momma taught you better than this," Beau's voice was gruff but not harsh, "You was a respectful boy, I raised you that way. Ain't respectful to want to be near a murderer, Will. You's gonna make your poor momma roll in her grave."

Will's lip trembled, his Daddy never seemed so disappointed in him before. He wasn't doing anything wrong. Just like Molly, Beau didn't see Will for who he was and just saw him for what he wanted to be. That didn't mean it didn't hurt him any less. He just wanted them to accept them for who he was, they were so important to him.

"Daddy, please. I ain't doin' nothing wrong," Will pleaded, wincing as his accent came back full swing.

"You's associating with that creature, boy. Ain't nothing natural or good about that, how the hell you think you ain't doin' nothin' wrong. You like hurtin' people, son?" Beau's voice was rising and Will hung his head in shame. He heard a quiet huff behind him, something too soft for the Wendigo. The stag then. If it were possible, it was almost as if the stag was disapproving of his father's words. The darkness in Will was bound to agree with the stag. But there was still a part that wanted to please his Daddy, a part of him that wanted so terribly for Daddy to accept him.

"No, Daddy, I don't like hurtin' people," Will heard a snarl from behind him and his heart lurched, "Daddy, please. The man killed you what was I 'sposed to do. He killed you for no good reason, he was jus' angry. You didn't deserve to die, you's was jus' protecting me"

Will was distressed and the salt from the tears flowing down his face was stinging his skin. He was wringing his fingers as he tried to meet his father's disappointed gaze. He watched as Beau shook his head at Will's response. He couldn't take it anymore, he turned back to the Wendigo. It's eyes once again had lost the warmth, but instead of being cold with Beau, it was being cold with Will. His lip trembled. The Wendigo didn't like Will lying about how he felt, especially since he already admitted to himself after Molly that he really wasn't affected by murder and even went as far as he enjoyed it. Even just saying it to placate his father was enough for Will to lose the monster's favor. Why was he fighting so hard to win it anyway? Maybe his Daddy was right, he wasn't meant to be someone bad. He had taught him better.

He turned to Beau. Maybe he could live with half-truths and not total acceptance.

"C'mon, son. C'mere, I can help you get back to who you were meant to be. My hard-working, honest boy," Beau smiled at him and held his hand out. Will could feel the anger from the Wendigo and the disappointment from the stag rising from behind him. His feet shuffled towards Beau. Why should he care about them, his father would help him. Another growl sounded behind him, he stopped. There was plenty of anger within the growl, maybe even some warning, but there was also a wounded tone to it. Will stopped in his place. He stopped wringing his hands and wiped the tears from his face. He almost wanted to punch himself for his own stupidity. His father was dead, how was he supposed to help? Even if he could, the damage was already done. Will had done things that he couldn't turn away from. He saw the beauty within death and the intimacy of death by his own hand. He wouldn't lie to himself and say he hadn't enjoyed, taken pleasure in it for weeks after. He couldn't lie to his father either about it, he would not settle for anything less than being seen and understood. He resumed his walk towards his father and gave a small glance back at the Wendigo with a small smile. He felt it's confusion.

"That's not who I am though, I'm not good. I won't be what I'm not. I'm sorry, Daddy," Will lowered his voice, trying to soften the blow. He placed his hands on Beau's shoulders and gently pushed him under and watched as Beau dissipated just as Molly had. He turned back to the Wendigo, it's expression guarded. Now it is unsure of Will.

"I won't deny who I am or what I have done. I'm sorry, I let the memory of my father almost get the better of me," Will said. The Wendigo slightly cocked it's head, weighing Will's words. In time Will was awarded another pleased smile. He let out a breath of relief and started back for the creature. The water was starting to return to his calf as he got closer to the other side of the bank, closer to the Wendigo. His body thrummed with anticipation.

He heard a ripple under him within the water and he frowned. What now? Who could possibly want to get in his way now? He felt the beast pacing in it's cage, not liking the constant interruptions getting in the way of their prize. He looked down, finding scorched eyes staring back at him.

"Hello, Will," Will stared down in displeasure as the voice rang in his head. Will knew why the person wouldn't be able to speak aloud to him. He gave the burned eyes a feral smile and a hearty laugh. He watched on as the body slowly raised from the water, giving him time to appreciate his own work. He flicked his eyes up to the Wendigo to see it's reaction. It was no

longer looking at Will but at his victim with rapt interest and appreciation. Pride flourished in Will's gut. He turned his gaze back to missing eyes.

"Hello, Peacekeeper Alaric," Will could hear the mocking tone in his own voice as he smiled, "Something got your tongue?"

He watched as Alaric's nostrils flared and Will looked amused at his mouth hanging wide open, giving him the perfect view of the lack of a tongue. Will had taken that from him. Among other things.

"Admiring your work?" a spitting tone was heard within his head. Will chuckled, void of humor or joy. It was filled with something much more sinister. Will returned his gaze to the empty eye sockets and purred at the burn marks within.

"Possibly, I did make you into something wonderful. Did I not?" Will shot back. He picked up wisps of pride coming from something other than himself. He looked up and found the Wendigo had returned its gaze on him. Will gave the Wendigo his own sharp smile in response and shuddered at the purring growl he received.

"You made me into something monstrous, not wonderful. People could barely look at my corpse when I was found. Quite bold to string me up in front of the Hall of Justice, was it not?" Will could hear the wounded ego in the Peacekeeper's voice. He took his time to answer as he let his eyes wander over his kill.

Deathly pale skin, ashen with death and almost translucent as Will mapped out the protruding blue veins traveling around Alaric's body like tiny ropes. He followed the veins down his arm and felt giddy as he saw the bloody stumps where Alaric's hands had been. His hands had been one of the first things Will had taken, deciding he couldn't hit anyone or start any more fights without them. Not that Will was gonna let him leave the abandoned cottage he had taken him to alive. He had allowed himself to find a small abandoned property on the outskirts of town so he could hear the man beg and scream. It felt like penance for what he had done to Will's father. He looked at the swirly patterns he had drawn with the Peacekeeper's blood up his arms in a reference to cuffs or bindings. Will had to strip the man of his uniform, besides his pants, so he wanted to represent the man's occupation on his body so the others could heed Will's warning when they saw it. 'Stop serving out your own definition of justice or I'll find you'. Not that a thirteen-year-old Will would have but he wanted them to live in the same fear he now found himself in.

He moved his eyes to the gaping hole in Alaric's chest and licked his lips. The cuts were clean, with no jagged edges, done with an unnatural precision for a thirteen-year-old boy. But that night had been the calmest Will had ever felt, the freest and the most powerful. He hadn't dug the knife in deep enough to damage the sternum or any organs underneath, just enough to pry the skin open. Will remembered the crunching of bone as he drove the hilt into each rib so he could remove the cage guardian what he was after. He remembered the pained and guttural screams coming from his prey before he had passed out from pain and blood loss. He had ripped away his sternum and broken ribs and watched as the man's heart was pumping fast, trying to make up for the blood loss and pulse elevated from pain and fear. Will gripped the heart in his hand, careful not to squeeze too hard, and was amazed at the feeling of the man's life within his hand. He had the power to do whatever he pleased. He had taken

his hunting knife and cut the heart out, killing the Peacekeeper. Now Will could see what he had replaced the heart with, wilting orange lilies. They had grown in the meadow surrounding the small cottage and Will was reminded of the meaning behind them. Strong hatred and disgust, something he had learned a few years prior from his mother. She was constantly teaching him new things, reading to him about the meaning behind flowers had been one of them. It had interested Will when he was little and he had taken it upon him to read the rest of the rather large book after his mother had died. He had found out shortly after that he had an impeccable memory that had served him well that night. He had made sure to pick the dying flowers to further show the rot that was his prey's heart. Will had taken meticulous care to fold the lilies into an accurate heart shape. He also buried some in the man's throat, he had been wearing generic fishing gloves so if anything got caught, it would be hard to tie it to Will. After he had finished with the flowers, he took his time scorching Alaric's eyes for making Will stare into them and leaving him with unsatisfying and dull emotions. How boring the man had been in life, a boring man had killed his father and now Will was making him into something better to give his father a more honorable death. Will smiled at the body.

This was **my** design.

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and seeing as you no longer have them, it's hardly fair you have an opinion on my work," Will continued to taunt Alaric.

What a monster you are. You aren't horrified to stare at my mutilated body, you are drinking it in with joy. What is wrong with you?"

Will snarled. How dare this pig try to tell him he was in the wrong, try to damper his pride in his work.

"What's wrong with me ? What is wrong with you? You're the one who murdered the father of a child. Not to mention you were dead set on beating me all because of my dog, or more accurately because you could no longer beat your wife. In the end, you were less than me and you deserved what you got. My father was a good man and he hadn't even got the chance to come near you. He was no threat to you, you stupid little thing. You acted on your impulses much like an animal would, no thought beforehand, it's only right I put you down like one," Will was calm in an eerie way. He was flush with anger but he didn't let it show, this pig didn't deserve his anger. Almost as if the creature could hear his thoughts, the Wendigo gave Will another proud purr. Will flushed.

"Did that give you the right to eat me as well?" the pig spit back at him. Will believed it was trying to aim for where it could possibly hurt, try to make Will horrified with his own actions. Will guesses it didn't expect the large smile to break out over his face. Will had never felt guilt for what he did, it had led him to accept the darker facets of his person. It had fulfilled his need to avenge his father and fed his bloodlust.

"Yes, it gave me every right. What better way to humiliate you in death than to consume you and keep an essence of you within the small teenage boy who managed to overpower and kill you. The largest wound I could give to your ego. You served as a delightful meal, better than any service you could offer to me living," Will admitted eagerly. He heard a powerful growl and his eyes snapped to the Wendigo. He gasped at the hunger that was rolling off the

creature, the stag stood proud beside him. This wasn't a hunger meant to consume, no this was a desiring type of hunger. Will was no longer interested in the body before him, he wanted to get where he had wanted to be in the first place. With the Wendigo. Before giving the man an option to refute Will, his arms shot out and grabbed the sides of his mutilated face. With a precise movement of his arms, he effortlessly snapped the man's neck and slung him into the water to dissipate.

He grinned victoriously and moved quickly towards his monster that was waiting for him with it's own pride in Will's kill. He watched as a large black, clawed hand reached for him and Will slid his hand into it. The skin was smooth and oddly soft, cool to the touch but somehow warming Will up effortlessly. He looked up.

Deep maroon eyes stared back at him.

Chapter End Notes

Thanks for reading as always and I'm going to give a special shout out to my friend's Hannigram fic, between silk and cedar by TopOfTheSixes. Also, comments and kudos are always appreciated, I love hearing y'all's thoughts on the chapters!

Happy early holidays!

Žiūrėti- pt.2

Chapter Summary

Žiūrėti- See/Watch

“By night, Beloved, tie your heart to mine and let them both in dreams defeat the darkness”- Pablo Neruda

Chapter Notes

Happy New Years!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will woke with a start, gasping for breath. His eyes searched his environment frantically, everything unfamiliar. It took him a couple of minutes to realize where he was exactly. He was in his room within the assigned District Four apartment, staring at the boysenberry colored walls. He shifted uncomfortably under the sheets, feeling rivulets of sweat make their way down his back where his shirt wasn't sticking to his skin. He could feel the faint, damp outline of sweat within the sheets outlining where he had slept for the night. He groaned and brought his hands up to his temple to rub the skin there. He didn't remember much of the dream, just smooth black skin, wilted orange lilies, and hungry maroon eyes. What bothered Will the most was that the dream hadn't felt like a nightmare, what he could remember of it. However, it must've been at the very least, intense, for Will to wake up drenched in sweat. He shook his head, the feeling of his hair sticking to his forehead made him feel nauseous, and saw tiny drops of sweat fly and cling to the velvet spread.

Will groaned again and hauled himself to the connecting shower. The bathroom was less spacious than the one Will had at home but no less lavish. Obsidian tiled floors, the cracks in the stone revealed in-laid gold, creating a marble effect. The porcelain bowl of the sink sat within a wooden cabinet, the wood was stained black to match the tiling. The shower sat situated within the right corner of the bathroom, with steel reinforcement beams and glass doors. Will was peeved at the glass doors, not wanting anyone to stumble in his bathroom and see him naked because there was no lock on the bathroom door. It just automatically slid open when the sensors picked up on the heat signature of a person. He would have to keep the shower quick, just in case.

He stripped out of the pajamas provided by the Capitol, silk pants that were clinging to Will's thighs, and a black shirt that was more mesh than an actual material that was cropped enough that his lower navel was exposed. He honestly didn't know how to work the shower and stood there naked and fidgeting. He opened the glass door and stepped in. He studied the four columns of scents he could choose from, he guessed, to infuse with his water, deciding whether or not he wanted a scent. He didn't want to be drenched in the scent so he was pleasantly surprised when he pressed the 'vanilla and cinnamon' option, a screen popped up on the glass pane next to him allowing him to fluctuate the amount of scent infused with the water. He set it relatively low and jumped when water poured over him immediately. He looked up and through his wet lashes he saw the rainfall showerhead directly above him. He watched as the glass created a fog effect as soon as the water turned on. Will smiled and felt more at ease now that he knew he was covered from the outside. He picked up on the warm scent of the vanilla and the slight spice of cinnamon fairly quickly and reached for the shampoo dispenser. The shampoo didn't seem to have much of a scent but only enhanced the smell around him. He was rather generous with the shampoo, wanting to get rid of the stick of the sweat. The water was hot enough to soothe Will's aches. Much like the shampoo, the conditioner only brought attention to the scent he had already chosen for himself. However, the body wash smelled faintly of magnolias, reminding Will of his Mother's perfume.

Once the remaining suds had run down the drain in an elegant whirl, Will wondered briefly how to turn the shower off. After contemplating, he decided he wasn't the one paying for utilities so whether it turned off or not, he didn't really care. He opened the shower door and frowned when the water turned off. He secretly hoped it would stay running, even though it wasn't an actual inconvenience to the Capitol, Will still wanted his small rebellion. Sighing he grabbed for the towels hanging elegantly on a heated rack next to the shower. It felt like really expensive wool that Will wrapped himself in, and really warm as well. Exiting the bathroom, he was startled to see a change of clothes already laid out for him.

Creepy.

They were grey and the shirt looked to be form-fitting while the pants were more straight-legged. The only hints of color were the red-lined hem and the small '4' printed just under the shirt collar. The material was made of nylon and other breathable materials made for athletics. It was obvious to Will that this is what he is to wear in the Training Center. He huffs and shakes his hair, slinging water everywhere. He has to pretend to be weak in front of the other tributes. The thought sends a small smile to Will's face. He has lived his life avoiding eyes and mumbling his way around shops, looking meek and anything other than dangerous. *It was so easy to pretend.* Pretend that he didn't look into their eyes because he was shy and unwilling, not because he could read a person's entire life with a long enough gaze. People often mistake him as not a threat and it has helped him survive in District Four. The same would apply here, look meek but not too easy of a target. He thought of green eyes from the Opening Ceremony and shuddered. Besides Hannibal, that is the only other tribute Will had any time to pay attention to. He would use the Training Center as a way to get to know the other tribute's weaknesses and strengths. His memory had never failed him and his recall was close to perfect so this would be a worthwhile exercise for him.

He thought of Hannibal at that moment.

A thrill coursed through his body at the thought of watching Hannibal in action. Although, Will is uneasy about the rising awareness they have with one another. He knows something about Hannibal and Hannibal knows something about him. He should stay away. He doesn't want anyone to be aware of the beast inside him, especially without the cover and alibi that the Games would provide for his actions. However, there was something so tempting when dealing with Hannibal. Will wanted to see what Hannibal was hiding beneath the mask that blocked his empathy so easily. It was one of the first things, besides those damn eyes, that had called Will's attention. He didn't find it often that he *wanted* to look closer at someone and know all their secrets. However, he had already thrown caution to the wind with Hannibal. Namely, with the amount of eye contact, he made with the boy and actually *holding* it with him or just outright provoking him with smiles that were all teeth or winking. What the hell was he thinking when he did that? At the moment, he wanted to see Hannibal's mask slip ever so slightly. Just as Will's had when he first caught Hannibal's eye. That slip of control had pissed Will off a little bit. The anger was satiated when Hannibal's lips parted and his eyes widened, locking with Will's with a warning look. Will didn't take the warning and he probably never would. Will wanted nothing more than to provoke him as much as possible. He got a thrill when knowing he is the one who makes such a poised and carefully crafted personality slip, even if it's only a little.

Will dressed quickly, almost becoming overwhelmed with anticipation and excitement. Exiting his room, he schooled his face back to a neutral state so he could hide flares of annoyance towards Freddie. When he had learned just how closely the district escort stayed near the tributes, Will almost marched up to Freddie's dinner chair last night to snap her neck. If he had to listen to another minute of her discussing the wonderful assortment of available fashion near her home, Will wouldn't hold himself back. Jack Crawford was more likely to just listen half-heartedly and brood, only talking to him and Molly when he wanted to remind them of their strategy or to coach with sponsors. As for Molly, sweet Molly, she was trying so hard to get closer to Will. She really was trying. Last night, she had sat next to him and started filling him in on her parents and how they were doing, saying that she had missed him and wished it wasn't the games that brought them back together. Will, however, wasn't even at the dinner table, at least not consciously. His thoughts were more focused on ashy brunette hair and white fabric against golden skin. He tried to listen because it was in all honesty annoying how affected he was by the District One tribute. Especially since there was no way they were both getting out of the arena alive, therefore whatever was brewing between the two boys didn't have anywhere to go. That thought was the one to snap him out of his stupidly pointless thoughts filled with wistfulness. Molly figured out he hadn't been listening and had looked a bit crestfallen which made Will feel guilty. He had tried to uplift her spirits by talking about his dogs, it had worked and he effectively got to avoid the topic of his father.

Will was lucky this morning and got to avoid Freddie. The only two at the dining table were Molly and Crawford. Will let out a tiny sigh in relief and trudged over to the seat he took last night. Molly gave him a bright smile from his left and Jack grunted in acknowledgment. He gave her a small smile in return and nodded at Jack. He began plating eggs, smoked ham, and a few fresh-baked rolls. This was completely different compared to his normal meals that include different variations of fish or grains. The different meat selections were particularly enjoyable since Will couldn't afford the more expensive cuts of meat that he was currently eating. He let out a sigh of appreciation as he rolled the ham over his tongue. At least the

Capital didn't annoy Will when it came to feeding him good food. He heard Jack clear his throat and looked up at the man wearily.

"Will, Molly, I would once again like to remind you that staying off the radar of Career tributes would be extremely beneficial. Seeing as it is highly unlikely for them to become allies with anyone outside of a Career district, it is best to avoid them at all costs. Especially you Will, you've already taken the spotlight off of the ones who usually live in it. I need you to stay away from them and try not to bring unwanted attention to yourself. Freddie already told me about the boy from District One staring at you," Jack gave him a pointed stare, telling Will that Jack hadn't known that Will was also staring back and the stare wasn't filled with murderous intent or anger. Not that it was filled with anything innocent either. Will fought the blush that threatened to color his cheeks with intense focus and just nodded at Jack, not finding any desire in correcting the man. He saw Molly fighting a smile in the corner of his eyes. He almost paled when he remembered how she had been standing there and had *laughed* when Jimmy had jokingly yelled at Will to stop eye fucking Hannibal. He sent her a playful glare and she raised her hands discreetly in mock surrender. Will said a silent thank you that Jack hadn't seen the interaction between the two of them.

"Jack, how exactly are we supposed to practice fighting or weapon skills if we want to keep our scores low?" Molly asked. Unlike Will who could fairly easily mimic another's movements and posture after watching a couple of times, Molly was more hands-on when it came to skill application.

"There will be trainers that will guide you, the Game Makers don't really watch sessions and just want to watch where tributes naturally excel or gravitate to. As long as there aren't any other tributes around to watch, you can learn," Jack explained and took another bite of the roll he'd been gnawing on. Molly nodded her head but didn't offer anything else to the conversation. Will didn't really have anything to offer either so the rest of breakfast was sat in silence, only the sound of utensils scraping and soft breathing filled the air.

Jack was the first to break the silence by getting up, his chair scraping over the hardwood floor. His eyes looked between Molly and Will's plate, judging whether or not they were done. When he saw their plates were pretty much empty, he waved a hand for them to follow behind him. Will's stomach churned. His earlier anticipation coming back just with less excitement. The possibility of actually being closer than fifteen feet from Hannibal was suddenly becoming very real to him. He was all for provoking the man when he had the safety of distance but would the, as absurd as it sounds, a fondness that Will had detected in Hannibal's eyes stay if Will were to keep pushing him. Images of smooth black skin and inhumanly sharp teeth flashed behind his eyes, catching him off guard. He frowned as Jack escorted them through the Remake Center towards a large garage type room. The door was less of a door and just large vertical bars that lifted when they came close to them. Will's eyes widened and took in the scene in front of him.

The room's walls were lined with different weapons and hanging target papers. Different stations littered the floor plan in equal spacing between each. A large platform hovered over the right wall, he saw the Game Makers pacing around in their little perch. Will's eyes caught the back wall, metal carts with what he guessed to be knives were placed beside each lane of

the station. Target papers to practice knife throwing. Will preferred his hands if he were to kill, but knives were a close second.

“Alright, you will be here for roughly four hours before they serve you lunch and after another two hours, I will be here to pick you up. Remember what I said,” Jack told them in a hushed whisper. Molly and Will nodded and headed off into the Center. Will’s ears picked up on sounds of weapons hitting their targets or the clang of it hitting the floor. He yearned to pick up a knife and toss it but he had to appease Jack.

“Will, I think I see a fire starting station. I’m gonna go practice if you’d like to join me,” Molly turned to him. Will shook his head.

“Not right now, Molly. I spotted the lure-making station but I will meet up with you in a couple of hours, okay?” He gave her a small smile and laid a hand on her shoulder. She looked shocked at the sudden touch but gave him a smile and a nod.

He walked to the back left of the large room. So far he hadn’t spotted Hannibal in his peripheral, he really didn’t want the boy to know he was searching for him. He thought he felt eyes on him as he spoke to Molly but a quick scan of the room after departing didn’t yield him any results. He didn’t have to look much further however when the sound of scuffling feet and pained grunts brought his attention to the large platform near the knife-throwing station, which was also coincidentally to the right of the lure-making station.

Therewith hair slightly sticking to his forehead due to sweat and a slightly heaving chest, was Hannibal standing over another tribute with a shaved head and a mocha skin tone. Hannibal’s eyes were fixated on his sparring partner as Will let his eyes drag appreciatively over Hannibal’s athletic form. The shirt clung to his broad shoulders and the sleeves wrapped around his biceps in a hug. Hannibal extended his arm to help the boy, who Will now knew was from District Two, up and continued. With a nod to Hannibal, they started throwing jabs. Will almost felt as if Hannibal was holding back in a way. His movements were carefully thought out and he was entirely in control, but his muscles seemed to be straining with restraint. Will felt his lip twitch upward. Hannibal wasn’t even putting his all into this fight and he still managed to look far more skilled than his partner. While his partner was in no way lacking in skill, throwing concise punches that would be painful if they landed, he still was no match for Hannibal.

Will watched appreciatively until halfway through the round when Hannibal caught Will’s eye. It was almost annoying how his focus could be entirely on Will and still not get caught by a single punch. Even slightly distracted, the man had the upper hand. It filled Will with a strange feeling of pride. He almost scoffed at the feeling. Hannibal’s eyes softened and Will caught the slight twitch of his lip. Not wanting to give Hannibal the satisfaction of catching him off guard, he gave Hannibal a steely glare and turned away to start walking towards the lure station. However, he stopped in front of one of the knife cart when he heard a snarl followed by a thump and pained grunt.

Hannibal had his left foot situated between the boy's shoulder blades and he was holding the boy's left arm up behind him, effectively holding him down. His gaze was trained on Will with dark eyes and a single raised brow. Either he was showing off for Will to recapture his attention like an animal would for a potential mate or was not happy with Will’s defiance.

Will guessed it was a bit of both and a small part of him wanted to huff with amusement. However, a larger part of Will was flushing with a strong desire, which only angered him. He sneered at Hannibal in defense and glanced at the knives next to him. Focusing his eyes back on Hannibal, giving a warning smile, picked the throwing knife up. He glanced at the target, he could aim for the head but he didn't think it would warrant the reaction he wanted and threw the knife watching as it landed dead center in the heart. Looking back at Hannibal who had let go of the boy in favor of watching Will, he gave him another warning look and then walked towards the lure table without a glance back.

That had been impulsive but he did not like the emotions Hannibal pulled from him so effortlessly, especially when it was because he pinned someone down to show off for Will. He hoped the Game Makers hadn't watched his little temper tantrum because Jack would probably strangle him if he found out. He gave an irritated sigh and pulled the stool out to sit down.

He focused on the materials in front of him that were provided to practice making lures. Will didn't need practice, a large part of his income came from selling his own lures to fisherman back home. He found the delicate craft relaxing and often found himself mixed up in intricate knots to lead his way out of someone else's head if it had been a particularly bad day. He concentrated on each material, each item could be used for a specific species of fish. If nothing else, Will was a good fisherman and knew which material to use as a lure for food. He focused on a bright orange feather, a couple of iridescent rocks, and pine needles. The bright color and shine would catch a fish's attention and draw them forward, the pine needles he would use to slightly fan around the hook to disguise the silver of the metal. He could already feel the tension that had come over from his encounter with Hannibal bleed away as he focused on wrapping the rocks around the hook with twine. So focused he hadn't even noticed the stare directed his way and how the scuffling of sparring had stopped about twenty minutes ago. He also didn't notice Hannibal taking quiet steps up to the station.

"If I approach, will I be met with a knife to the heart?" a deep timbre of an accented voice brought Will out of his focus and his face flushed. He already knew who was behind him and Will wondered with irritation if there was anything about the boy that wouldn't send him headfirst back into the beginning of puberty. His voice gave Will the same feeling that Will had got when he had tried hot chocolate for the first time. Liquid warmth flooded his veins and there was slight dizziness that came with it, not enough to make him nauseous but enough to jumble his thoughts. He was glad he wasn't facing Hannibal at this moment.

"That depends. Am I going to get shoved face-first into the floor with a foot to hold me down?" Will asked, he tried his best to sound irritated but with how softly he was talking it sounded more like a joke.

"Of course not, it would be rude to do so outside of the sparring arena," Hannibal answered. He sounded so polite, Will almost rolled his eyes if he wasn't so distracted by trying to pinpoint his strange accent.

"Oh? Then you're safe from a throwing knife, but if you do decide that the notion isn't rude anymore, let me know and I can show you how equally effective this hook is compared to a knife," Will shoots back, not as polite. He still hasn't turned to look at Hannibal and even

though he isn't really focusing on the lure anymore, he also isn't ready to face Hannibal. He knows his cheeks are still glowing red and even though he can't feel it, he also knows his pupils are dilated. He won't give him the satisfaction.

"I assure you, you will not be meeting the floor by my hand," Hannibal sounded almost amused and Will heard him shuffle closer, "That's beautiful, you seem to have extensive knowledge crafting an appropriate lure."

Will knew the statement had a double meaning and that's when he turned to face Hannibal. He looked him straight in the eyes, enjoying Hannibal's eyes widening ever so slightly, and gave him a crooked smile. *His* smile, not a borrowed smile. Hannibal's eyes immediately flickered to Will's mouth and Will watched amusedly as he detected a tiny flush of Hannibal's neck and his lips parted for less than a second. Hannibal's eyes found his once more with furrowed brows.

"As long as I know the fish well enough, I like to believe I can craft an appropriate lure to match," Will responded, glad when his voice came out steady and calm. He could smell the scent of pine and musk from Hannibal seeing as he was only a few inches away, not touching Will but the gap was small enough that it could be closed by leaning forward. The scent was wreaking havoc on Will's hormones and he tried to ignore it the best he could. He could also see Hannibal a lot better than he had yesterday. His eyes were even more captivating up close. Amber pools that oddly reminded Will of something that he had seen before. He just couldn't remember what, all he knew of it was inky black and jutting bones.

"And how is it that you get to know these *fish* so well?" Hannibal asked him, emphasizing fish. Will didn't know if he wanted to strangle the man for his metaphors or jump him. Hannibal was bad for Will's focus and he was becoming all too familiar with that feeling. Will cocked his head.

"Isn't it obvious?" Will feigned ignorance to the double meaning and gave another smile, but this one wasn't crooked and boyish, it was all teeth and predatory, "I've had a lot of practice."

What a cruel and capricious angel this boy was.

Hannibal was absolutely taken by Will Graham. He hadn't thought it possible for Will to surprise him any more than he already had, but he stood corrected. When Will had given him an impassive glare, so different from the fond and interested look from the day before, Hannibal was entirely amused. Less amused when Will turned away from him without so much as a second look. That was enough to make him bored of the sparring match with Tobias Budge, the male tribute from Two, and pin him to regain Will's attention. He was once again met with what he believed to be indifference before he was corrected when Will launched a throwing knife, landing perfectly on the heart marker. The sneer that had painted Will's lips was just as captivating as when they had parted in surprise at the ceremony. Hannibal found each expression of Will's alluring and was pleased when Will had presented him with the image of him throwing that knife. Especially picking to target the heart, instead of the head. Personal. Although, he supposes that it was meant as a warning but for Hannibal that was an invitation to approach. He took his time approaching, giving Will time to lose

himself in the craft of a lure. Hannibal also just wanted to watch as the boy concentrated on his craft, his furrowed brows, glazed over eyes, and his tongue slightly poking through his lips. When Hannibal finally decided the timing was appropriate, his heightened olfactory sense picked up an addictive scent. Vanilla and cinnamon with an underlying trace of magnolia and something warmer like the spray of seawater and lavender. The slight lavender smell had Hannibal's head swimming, paired with the slight spray of saltwater, it was intoxicating. The overbearing need to bury his nose in Will's bouncy curls was steadily rising.

Will hadn't faced him immediately and Hannibal was overcome with amusement. They hadn't even spoken and Will already had figured out the ways to slightly irritate Hannibal. With anyone else, he would've found it unspeakably rude but he found it utterly charming coming from Will. His patience was rewarded when Will did face him. Will gave him a genuine smile that wasn't crafted for his prey and the one he had given at the Reaping dulled in comparison. Hannibal swore the world dulled around him and Will was the only thing lighting up the space around them at that moment. Hannibal prided himself on his self-control but Will Graham smiling at him with a cheshire grin was almost enough to make him reach out and covet the boy all for himself. Maybe also lay him out on the table before him and make everyone see just how far Hannibal is willing to go to have this boy with him. It didn't exactly help Hannibal any when Will had told him he had *a lot of practice* when it came to getting to know his prey.

Hannibal could already imagine how Will would go about stalking and luring a much larger prey and he wanted to see for himself. He clenched his jaw. What a terrible tease Will Graham is.

"Practice often yields the best results later in life," Hannibal remarked, "May I watch? I don't particularly have the *practice* you do with lures."

Will's eyes, which had looked more cerulean yesterday but now Hannibal could see the jade tones up close, shined with amusement and his pupils dilated.

"Or I could help you make one," Will offered, standing up to offer Hannibal the chair. Hannibal lifted a brow and sucked in a breath when their chests brushed faintly as Will got up. The clothes he was wearing were suddenly very heavy and scratchy against Hannibal's skin. He flexed his hand and took the seat.

"I would be happy to learn," Hannibal replied, taking note of how his voice had lowered.

Will came to his left side and Hannibal was strikingly aware of their closeness. He was preparing the station for a new lure to be made as he took his own off and set the other materials that he hadn't been using. Hannibal watched his hands as they moved. His hands looked strong, the subtle flex of veins as they moved and a few scars on the knuckles, but his fingers themselves were long and thin. Almost like a piano player's hands. The thought interested Hannibal seeing as he played harpsichord. When the station was restored, looking as if Will hadn't touched anything, to begin with, he shuffled closer to Hannibal and leaned down to speak.

“Each fish is different, you have to know what would capture their attention and keep it. It requires a lot of patience to make it seem to the fish that there is nothing else around it besides the temptation of the lure,” Will murmurs in his ear and slides his hands on Hannibal’s shoulders briefly before removing them.

Terrible, tempting boy.

“What would be enough to cause such a distraction?” Hannibal asks, matching Will’s hushed murmurs. Will brushed his fingers over bright-colored materials, such as feathers or fur.

“Bright colors will always draw attention, however, you must be careful with them because if it is too bright, certain *fish* are smart enough to recognize a trap when they see one,” Hannibal could feel Will’s warm breath next to his ear, “Muted colors from materials such as deer fur creates enough movement in the water to look like lesser fish if you are baiting a carnivorous fish. It’ll be tempting enough to draw them in for weaker prey even if they aren’t hungry. It also works well to hide the shine of the hook from the fish.”

Hannibal hummed in response.

“Which do you prefer to catch? Those easily distracted by bright colors or other predators that need convincing,” Hannibal asked.

“For money, the easier catch gives me large quantities to sell. However, for personal use, I find more gratification and larger meals come from the catch that requires more patience,” Will answers and Hannibal bites the inside of his cheek to keep himself from smirking. He wondered how far Will was actually running with his metaphor and how much of it was literal. Will’s potential may be more than he had originally anticipated if they were on the topic of *consumption*.

He watches Will grab the deer fur and two large grey scales. Will sets the hook on the stand and his chest presses to Hannibal’s back. He finds himself wrapped up in Will Graham and he is pleasantly surprised at the notion.

“The scales will help reflect light to help sell the image of it being a fish. Grab the brown twine over there,” Will’s voice was breathy and Hannibal couldn’t repress the smug smile that came over him. He wasn’t the only one affected by the sudden contact. Hannibal straightened his posture and took Will’s sharp inhale with stride as their cheeks brushed. Will was leaning over his shoulder behind him to better direct Hannibal and he could not pass up the opportunity. Will was flushed, Hannibal felt the raised skin temperature and the skin of his cheek was sinfully soft, not even scratchy from growing facial hair. Hannibal’s cheek tingles at the contact. He grabbed the twine.

Hannibal felt Will’s arms hesitate for a moment before they wrapped around Hannibal and his hands laid on top of Hannibal’s to guide him while making the lure. Hannibal’s lips parted. Will’s hands besides a few calluses were just as soft and they were pleasantly warm. His thumb brushed Will’s.

“The twine is to help keep the hair and scales in place, it can be tricky to maneuver so I’ll help,” He felt Will’s lip brush against his ear, and Hannibal’s lip curled into a snarl. His

muscles tensed with restraint as it took everything he had not to turn his head slightly and capture Will's lips with his own. No. He would be patient, he couldn't afford to scare off Will especially in the situation they were in that already had everyone else on guard. All he could offer was a curt nod and his eyes scanned the room looking for a way to re-center himself.

The training center had fled with the rest of the tributes and Hannibal smirked when a few tributes were eyeing the two of them. Even if he couldn't directly stake a claim, he could do so more subtly. He met each gaze with a look that begged for them to interrupt the intimate bubble he was in with Will. All looked away except for a pair of familiar green eyes. The boy from ten was watching Will, well both of them, again. His eyes were dark and his brow was furrowed, giving away to his anger. The beast within him purred as Hannibal gave the tribute a smug smile and settled back not Will for a dramatic flair, pretending to mess up so Will's hands were once again upon him to guide. The boy bared his teeth and Hannibal raised a brow, not at all threatened by the display of aggression. Will was still whispering in his ear explaining the making behind the lure and Hannibal was giving him appropriate responses and focus when needed, other times he was directed on fully displaying dominance and control over the situation with the boy from Ten who was still watching.

"I hope you don't think this is an offer to be allies in the arena," Will's murmur brought back his attention once more. Hannibal chuckled, he had a feeling that opinion would be subject to change soon. Or so he hoped.

"Oh? We have not even discussed such a thing, it would be rude to presume," Hannibal whispered back, as he presumed that Will wasn't being entirely truthful on the matter.

"I wouldn't want you to think it was an option, I just wanted to put that on the table," Will's thumb pressed into his knuckle as he helped Hannibal weave in the fur.

Hannibal hummed a noncommittal noise.

"I'm not looking for a friend," Hannibal couldn't decide if the lip brushing against his ear this time had been purposeful or not when Will whispered that to him. However, Hannibal could agree with him on this notion. He turned his head to meet Will's eyes at an angle, his lip quirked in a smile as he pressed back into Will's chest and shifted his hand to brush over Will's in a mock embrace.

"Good, because neither am I, Will," he said while watching Will's pupils expand.

Chapter End Notes

I hope you enjoyed their first actual meeting. Kudos and comments are always appreciated!

Norèti

Chapter Summary

Norèti- Want

*“Their hands meet, and light spills like a hundred gold urns pouring out of the sun.” -
Madeline Miller*

Chapter Notes

I would like to apologize for my long absence, my father was so kind to not inform me that he had been exposed to Covid-19 and I tested positive a week after New Years'. My symptoms were not the worst but even after I was no longer a positive case, I could barely stay awake for more than 3-4 hours at a time. I was constantly exhausted and in no condition to write so I apologize for that, my father also was in the hospital with Covid for about 2 months and was on oxygen up until a few days ago. It's been a stressful couple of months with being diagnosed and getting back to better health and catching up with a couple of college classes course loads. This chapter consists of the words I wrote when I found myself having the time and energy to write. Hopefully, the introduction to another character in this chapter and the introduction to more dialogue will help ease me back into writing because I genuinely adore this fic and want to finish and continue posting. Once again, I apologize and hope you guys enjoy this chapter!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will was going to strangle Hannibal Lecter.

Or Jump him

Or both.

Something about his presence made Will's head spin and not in the way being around people usually does. Hannibal was a frozen lake when it came to showing his emotions. The thin spots in the ice barrier are where Will could pick up faint hints of what he was feeling but other than that, nothing. It was frustrating in a way that Will never experienced. Not only that but it was annoyingly soothing. Nothing overwhelms him, even eye contact with the boy. It made him bolder and more impulsive.

Like mouthing at his ear to get a reaction out of him impulsive.

Above all that, however, he genuinely enjoyed teaching Hannibal how to make a lure. He was obviously intelligent, Will and he were throwing out topics that Will had only dreamed he could talk about with another person and Hannibal responded with ease. Not only that, but he seemed actually interested to learn what Will had to offer him. He would ask questions in regards to what they were doing and why they would use one material over another. He also didn't push Will, never overstepped any boundaries. In fact, the boy was *maddeningly* polite. Will had been the one touching the boy like they had known each other for years. Will also just didn't want to admit that touching Hannibal Lecter was somewhat addicting. He was so warm and Will hadn't allowed anyone close enough to touch him besides finger brushing on accident with people he was selling fish to. Will knew he was being handsy but Hannibal did not seem to mind. At all. In fact, at one point Hannibal even settled into Will's chest when he was helping him knot the twine and the whole air around him was comparable to a cat who caught the canary. Smug.

Hannibal also smelled like pine and some other blend of spices that had Will in a fugue state at one point. Hannibal Lecter as a whole person was dangerously addictive. Will never understood his peers' need to sneak around District Four just to hook up because their hormones were acting up but now he does. Will had people in his head before, it's a side effect of his empathy but Hannibal has quickly dominated the space of his brain.

Good, because neither am I, Will.

Will groaned at the small table he and Molly were sat at for lunch and covered his face with his hands. Hannibal's accent all but purred out Will's name and Will almost tackled him on sight. If it hadn't been for the Game Makers calling lunch, Will's not so sure he would've stopped himself. He had realized when helping Hannibal make that lure that he should distance himself from Lecter. He couldn't afford an ally, he would end up getting attached and would be unable to kill them when the time came for him to do so. Especially since he could already tell that Hannibal was becoming addicting to be around very quickly. So he had made it a point to Lecter that this was not an offer and when he had turned to look at Will, his pupils were wide and his mouth was quirked up into a smirk. His fingers traced over Will and he barely contained a shiver at the delightful tingles dancing over his touch starved skin.

"Will?" Molly's voice surfaced and snapped Will out of his brooding that was slowly mixing with arousal.

"Huh, what?" His eyes flicked to her face, not her eyes, and his brows furrowed.

"You okay? Your face is really red and you seem to be lost in your own little world," Molly sounded concerned but also slightly amused.

"I'm fine, Molly. It's just a little warm in this cafeteria," he said ducking his head. She snorted and popped a torn piece of chicken into her mouth.

"Yeah, of course. I bet the temperature is to blame, not cuddling up to a hunky Career tribute," she teased. His head shot back up in alarm and he felt the blush crawling up his neck.

“What?”, he said in a harsh whisper, “I don’t know what you’re talking about Molly, I was showing him how to tie a lure.”

His voice sounded strong and convincing but Will was ready to collapse in embarrassment.

“Will, I don’t think you needed to be pressed behind him to show him how to tie a lure or guide his hands for him,” she rolled her eyes, “ You taught me plenty of times while standing off to the side and correcting what I did wrong without touching me.”

Will stammered, grasping for an excuse but he knew she was right. He never was so hands-on when it came to teaching. He buried his face in his hands again and considered heavily banging his head against the dull gray alloy of the table. Molly laughed at him and he sent her a scowl.

“It isn’t like the man was protesting. He seemed rather happy that you decided to become such a *personal* teacher, shooting smug looks to anyone he caught staring at the two of you. That’s also probably why his eyes haven’t left the back of your head since you sat down, he has got it bad,” Molly said, eyes twinkling with mirth. Will’s own widened at her statement and his head whipped around. He inwardly cursed himself for being so obvious and heard another giggle come from Molly.

His eyes were once again pulled to lidded amber eyes.

Hannibal was staring at him and once Will made eye contact, he smirked, or what Will thinks is Hannibal’s version of a smirk, and popped an olive into his mouth. If Will could get any redder in the face, he probably was. His whole body was buzzing and warm. Hannibal should not be allowed to make eye contact with anyone, it was an instant curse of arousal. Will scowled at him but that only seemed to encourage Hannibal. Hannibal’s head ducked slightly as he kept eye contact with Will while his right hand twirled his fork. Will’s eyes slid over to the long, dextrous fingers that spun the fork effortlessly within his finger. Will wondered if Hannibal played piano, his hands were perfect for them. Hannibal’s tongue poked between his lips slightly wetting them and Will grounded his teeth together. He felt his scowl twist further as he huffed and turned back to face Molly.

“Do you think you guys will be allies within the arena,” Molly asked, eyes flashing with amusement at Will’s moodiness.

“No,” came Will’s short reply. Molly cocked her head to the side.

Will huffed again and stabbed at his food gingerly, losing his appetite.

“Why not?”

“Because I have no use for a Career ally, besides I am going to keep you safe as best as I can. I can’t do that if I am worried about a fragile thread holding me and District One together,” Will explained. Molly sighed.

“Will, you don’t have to-”

“I know.”

Their conversation was stunted after that as Molly turned her face away from him to stare at the plain white wall behind him. Will's shoulders drooped, this whole experience was exhausting so far and he had no idea when they were gonna be allowed back into the Training Center. His eyes swept over the portion of the cafeteria and his eyes settled on the corner dedicated to District 12. There, sitting alone, was a girl no older than thirteen with raven hair and large blue eyes staring blankly at the seat in front of her. When he took a quick look at the tables around them, he saw a man with ginger hair chatting with the boy from Ten at his table. Will frowned. He didn't think that people had to be friends here but leaving a thirteen-year-old child alone at a table seemed a little low.

“Molly, I'll be right back,” Will said quickly as he shoved his chair back and stood. Thankfully, no one paid Will any attention as he strode across the small cafeteria and came to stand in front of the table the girl sat in.

“May I join you?” Will asked softly.

The girl looked up, startled. Will avoided looking directly into her eyes but he could feel the cool calculation as she regarded him before nodding. He gave a small smile, that was more a quirk of his lips. He wasn't great at branching out socially.

“I'm Will,” he sounded kind but Will didn't want her to think he was being condescending towards her as if her being younger made her less.

“I know, you're the one the Capital is obsessed with,” she said bluntly, eyes shining. Will gave a small laugh after he grimaced.

“Yeah, I guess so. It's not that hard to gain the favor of people who live their lives by the standards of gaudy aesthetics,” he replied, his eyes settling on a fly-away hair in her braid. This earned Will a stifled laugh and he flicked his gaze to watch her cover her mouth with her hand. Will's lips quirked up.

“I'm Abigail Hobbs, my table mate who decided to leave is Nicholas Boyle. He hasn't exactly been enjoying my company,” Abigail explains softly but she grimaces at the last portion of her statement and she almost looks pained. Will doesn't comment on that because he has the sense there is a deeper meaning but he isn't here to interrogate her. He cocks his head.

“It's nice to meet you, Abigail,” He says sincerely.

“Why did you come over here, Will?” Abigail asks, it isn't cold but curious.

“To be honest with you, Abigail, I saw you here alone and you reminded me of someone,” Will sighed, thinking of wide, doe eyes in the tessera office, “That and my table mate was teasing me about something and I figured I would find better company here”

“Oh? What did she have to say?” Abigail's eyebrows twisted up in amusement and she gave a coy smile. Will deflated playfully at this.

“I have a feeling you already know,” Will grumbled.

“Does it have anything to do with the fact that you have been the District One boy’s eye candy since the Opening Ceremony?” she says slyly with a childish giggle.

“Does everybody know about that?” Will scoffs, exasperated. He had to stop himself from throwing his arms in the air. Abigail shrugged and gave another mischievous look.

“It is difficult to miss when he looks like he wants to devour you,” Abigail tells him, although her mood has darkened slightly in the mention of ‘devouring’. Will cocks his head.

“What is it, Abigail?” he asks suddenly, his curiosity piqued. He gives her another once over, now much closer than he had been when sitting at the table with Molly. He had already noticed how her gaze is meticulous and picks apart his movements much like a hunter would while stalking its prey. This makes sense, she is from District Twelve, the poorest district where most of its citizens hunt for their food. But Abigail has an edge to her, her shoulders are set in a tense line and her eyes dart around like she is looking for someone in particular.

Like she is the prey being hunted, Will’s brain supplied him. His lips are set in a hard line now. He really hadn’t come over here to read the girl and he still avoided her eyes, but Will just knows she is hiding something from the conversation.

“What?” she looks at him startled and her shoulders hunch.

“I- Sorry, I pick up on other’s emotions easily, I don’t know how to explain it,” A lie, “and something seems to be bothering you all of a sudden. Do you need me to leave?”

“No!” she looks actually panicked now before she seems to remember herself, “I mean, no. I like that you came over here, Will, you seem really nice. It’s just weird being so far from home, I only left my house when me and my dad would hunt.”

Will really wished he had the capacity to be surprised about his accuracy anymore. He gave her a small smile, encouraging her to continue.

“Some things just remind me of home and it makes me upset,” she continues, Will gets the feeling this answer is vaguer than it sounds.

“I understand.”

He does. The lure station had reminded him of the river at home, which had reminded him of his dogs. He missed his dogs and his home.

“It’s hard to leave the only place you’ve ever known, especially when now you are being offered everything you’ve never had but needed by the same people who have taken them in the first place,” Will offered her. Abigail nodded.

“I wasn’t even allowed to have schooling, my mom taught me everything. My father told me that too many things could happen at school because of the fact that our school isn’t separated by age. We are just corralled into a classroom. Small children with loud teenagers

are a bad mix according to my father,” She told him while worrying her bottom lip with her teeth.

Will did not miss the way she referred to her dad as ‘father’ and how he seemed more overprotective than most. He looked at her closely and watched as she fidgeted under his gaze. He relented.

“I was your age when my dad was killed, I’ve lived on my own since then. I couldn’t go back to school because I would’ve been placed directly into the district orphanage and I don’t do well in small spaces with a lot of people who can’t control their emotions. So to learn I had to sneak into the Justice Hall’s library at night and spend who knows how many hours reading on any topic I could get my hands on,” Will said, his lips twitched into a small smile as he reminisced on the multiple times he was almost caught.

“Wait, you live by yourself?” Abigail asked with no small amount of wonder in her eyes. Will’s heart squeezed and wondered what exactly her father was doing to make her want to live alone.

“For about four years now, sometimes my friend Peter stays with me because his parents are hard on him even though he got hurt a couple of years ago so his cognitive function isn’t what they want it to be. They can be assholes about his condition so he stays with me for a couple of weeks every now and then and helps me out,” he said with a soft smile. He missed Peter, the boy was so sweet and always offered good conversation regardless of what his parents thought of his intelligence.

Abigail nodded with a wistful air about her. She ducked her head and took a deep inhale, the breath was shaky and Will contemplated whether she was suddenly nervous. He cursed himself for the possibility he made her uncomfortable with the topics of home, knowing the subject was touchy.

“Do you hunt, Will?” she asked, peering at him through her lashes. His eyes widened, he wasn’t expecting that question.

“Um, no. I fish,” he replied.

“They’re not so different. One you stalk, the other you lure,” she tilted her head back up and looked at him. Will chuckled.

“You’re correct, Abigail. Do you fish, luring is also a useful skill,” Will smiled and she sucked in a sharp breath. Her eyes glazed over momentarily before coming back to herself with a knowing smile.

“I’m sure the boy from District One would agree after today,” she joked. Will smirked.

Well played, little doe. Steering me away from a topic you want me to know nothing about.

“I can’t escape the scrutiny anywhere, I’m destined to be tortured by a thirteen-year-old in pigtail braids for the rest of my life. Whatever shall I do?” he groaned emphatically.

“I don’t think it’s the worst thing in the world, you could be like the District One boy and have to listen to you drone about fishing lures just to get any action,” she said, shortly following it with a hearty laugh. Will smiled at the girl, glad she seemed less tense. Even if it was at his own expense. Will opened his mouth to quip back at her but the sound of a sharp clap came from the overhang nestled in the left corner of the cafeteria. Will whipped his head to the source of the sound and ignored the churn of disgust at the sight of Mason Verger leering in his and Abigail’s direction.

“Tributes! Training will now resume, please make your way back to the Training Center,” Mason’s nasally voice resonated throughout the cafeteria making a few people wince. Will turned to Abigail who seemed to catch the way Mason had been staring at them, looking at Will with retrained fear. Big blue eyes flashing to him for comfort even though they just met, and Will was nothing if not a man who picked up wandering strays. He stood.

“Come on, Abigail. I’ll teach you to properly lure and fish,” he held his hand out to her and blocked Mason’s view of her with his back. She nodded her head quickly and took his hand. Her hand was small in his and warmer to the touch against his slightly cooled skin. He guided her to the station Molly had sentenced herself to before because there was a small enough stream to help the tributes learn how to disguise themselves amongst different textures. It didn’t actually have any fish in it but it was wide enough to help her learn.

“This would be a lot more enjoyable with waders,” Will murmured as he collected the items he needed that was laying to the side to peruse. He was not particularly excited to have wet calves but Abigail needed to know this. Depending on the arena, there could be things to hunt or fish, maybe both but it never hurts to have more than one survival skill in the Hunger Games.

“Waders?” Abigail spoke softly from behind his shoulder. He chuckled when he turned to her and saw the muted fascination with all the fishing gear.

“They’re like rubber overalls with boots to keep the water from soaking your clothes and to keep you insulated if the water is cold,” Will explained. She nodded and took the fishing rod that Will held out to her. Her fingers brushed over the wooden handle as she tested the grip. Will walked over to the stream and grimaced at the feeling of wet socks since he took his shoes off to avoid them getting wet. He turned to Abigail who followed his lead with her shoes and held his hand out for her once more. The corner of her mouth twitched and she gave him her hand as he helped wade into the small stream. She squealed as she stepped into the water, her blue eyes widening with glee. Will cracked a small noise.

“It’s cold, Will!” She said it with a smile and Will let out an amused huff.

“It is, but you can’t make noises if you are getting into the water, the ripple is enough disturbance without noise,” he chided her gently, “Obviously, you don’t have to get in the water but I find it easier and more relaxing to do so and unless they have a projectile weapon, you can hear other tributes due to the water and it will give more time to act unlike standing on a bank.”

Abigail listened to him with rapt interest and her face was scrunched with intense seriousness, his heart warmed. He stood behind her to help adjust her stance and grip on the

pole and then moved away and allowed her to toy with casting and reeling. He held in a laugh as her tongue poked out between her lips as she was focusing on her activity. He talked to her in hushed tones, correcting her when needed and giving praise when deserved. He scowled as she soaked up the praise with a quiet hesitance as if his pride in her work would come with a price. His fingers twitched at his sides.

“Now this is the most important advice I could offer you,” Will starts.

Abigail looks at him and waits for him to continue.

“You always should name the bait or lure after someone you cherish, you’re more likely to catch something that way. I usually use my dog’s name and sometimes my father if I am having particularly little luck that day,” he tells her in a dramatic whisper. It is a superstitious belief after all, but Will believes in it. She smiles and takes the poll back from him and lets out another cast, even though there are no fish in the water he knows she named the lure because her eyes closed momentarily.

“Can I ask who?” he asked hesitantly, expecting for it to be her mother rather than her father. Wide blue eyes look at him with a soft childish affection, he raises an eyebrow.

“I named it Will.”

Will found himself on the roof of the tribute center that night, staring out past the city line. His legs dangled over the edge and he was slightly shivering from the chilled breeze. His mind was a mess of thoughts. After Abigail’s confession, they had gone quiet, a somber air around them. Will had never wanted siblings but he could imagine taking Abigail under his wing as his sister. They had things in common and she wasn’t overbearing for his empathy. She wasn’t unreadable like Hannibal, she was just mellow. However, Will didn’t want to read anything from her that she wasn’t ready to tell him. He sighed. He scraped the concrete of the roof ledge and swung his foot back and forth. He had stepped away from Hannibal in fear of attachment and here he was with Abigail, attached. He doubted his ability to keep her safe because he didn’t want her to die. Unlike Molly, who he would help keep away from trouble, he could kill her if absolutely necessary and accepted her death already. Abigail, however, he couldn’t kill. Too big eyes, too many things haunting her, too familiar. He propped his head on his drawn-up knee.

“Will?” a voice called from behind him.

He startled and tensed. He had made sure no one knew he came up here, sneaking through servant’s quarters and telling Jack and Molly he was turning in early so they wouldn’t disturb him. He knew that soft timbre however and relaxed slightly, he didn’t turn, however.

“Hannibal,” he murmured. He could hear the slight scuffle of feet and the boy’s presence became closer. He could also feel Hannibal’s hesitance, which surprised him because he didn’t seem the type to hesitate at all, and heard a hand drop back to its side from the way it

brushed against the fabric of Hannibal's pants. Will smiled. Hannibal wanted to touch him, he guessed that it was his hair in particular because he noticed how Hannibal's gaze had drifted upward multiple times previously. He abhorred touch but Hannibal's presence was so grounding for Will and his skin was *so warm* that his skin tingled from the memory of his touch.

"Go ahead, Hannibal," he permitted the touch because he wanted it too. He wanted his head to stop swimming and to be able to focus enough to get away from the rolling smoke in his brain, fogging his rational thought. He heard Hannibal's slight inhale of surprise and Will found himself smiling again. Wisps of surprise and adoration twirled around him in a waltz, Will's eyes widened. He figured that Hannibal *liked* that Will could read his emotions and desires much easier than most and he also *liked* that Will defied his expectations of others surrounding him, but he couldn't figure out that ever-mounting adoration. It was slowly building within the boy behind him and it caught Will off guard, he just didn't expect that it would be him of all people to knock loose the mask Hannibal wears flawlessly. Much less did Will expect that he would like the attention. He relished in it, it felt like *his*, something he was entitled to. He gnawed on his lip. Hannibal Lecter was dangerous to Will because Will Graham was extremely possessive of what he considered his, he coveted and refused to share. If Hannibal kept on like this, Will knew what would happen and that could not occur.

He felt warm skin slide against his neck, a thumb brushing the nape. He shivered from the contact, even though he knew it had been coming. Fingers carded through his hair, slightly tugging in some places but heavily petting and twirling strands in others. Will's eyes closed, blissed out of his mind from this small contact. *It felt so good*.

"Why are you up here, Will," Hannibal spoke quietly, sounding amazed as he was allowed to touch Will.

"I could ask you the same," Will smiled, avoiding the question for now.

"I saw a halo of brown curls sneak off through the sliding door made for the Avoxes and found myself curious," he replied.

"I imagine you don't find yourself curious often, Hannibal, and when you are I find myself believing it may be dangerous to be on the opposite side of that curiosity," Will told him, it didn't sound much like a good statement but Will brightened for the fact he managed to pique the boy's curiosity. He wanted to see the beast that Hannibal contained within him and wanted just as much to see the violence he can carry out. The darkness shifting behind those amber eyes was like a siren to the cage Will kept locked, only to unleash in extreme conditions. He was envious of the knowledge he had that Hannibal never denied himself of his own wants and instinct, unlike Will. Will accepted that he wasn't what most would deem 'good' but he wasn't ready to completely let go. He had yet to allow himself the pleasure of being one with that darkness. Besides the Peacekeeper, there had only been two other times Will indulged.

"Extraordinary boy," Hannibal whispered in awe, so low Will didn't think he was meant to hear, it caused the heat to rise to his face anyways.

“Do you feel you are in danger being at the end of my curiosity, Will?” Hannibal asked in that placid tone with only hints of warmth beneath. Will rolled his eyes, Hannibal loved his tests and games.

“Yes,” Will answered readily, “But that doesn’t mean I am afraid of that, whether I should be or not. You are looking for something and you think you have found it within me, a certain *potential*. So now you throw out double meanings and tests to see if you are right. Do you want to be seen, Hannibal?”

He took the tightened grip on his hair as a yes to his question.

“It is every human’s desire to be seen,” Hannibal supplies, the breathless quality of his voice betrayed his want to appear unimpressed.

“To be seen doesn’t always come with understanding and acceptance, however. That desire, I imagine, is dangerous for you,” Will tells him, but interrupts before Hannibal can reply, he didn’t want his game revealed too soon. He quite liked the game that had begun between them, “Why did you follow me, Hannibal?”

“I brought dinner, Will,” Hannibal whispered in his ear. He had crouched behind him and Will hadn’t noticed, too focused on trying to grasp anything Hannibal was thinking. Will gasped and turned slightly to catch his eye. The hand slipped out of his hair and he mourned the loss.

“Oh?” Will murmured.

“It is not up to the usual standards I would hold to my own cooking but I do not have that luxury here. I figured with the way you rushed off that you had not taken the opportunity to eat and I would greatly enjoy sharing a meal with you,” Hannibal said, still crouched behind him. Will sucked his bottom lip under his teeth and took a deep inhale. For someone who said they didn’t want an ally, he wasn’t exactly making any effort to stunt the growing companionship between the two. He is going to blame it on his inner emotional turmoil from the time with Abigail. He pulled his leg up from the edge and made quick work of turning around. Hannibal backed up to allow him space and Will caught sight of the basket set a couple of feet away from them.

“What is it, exactly?” Will peeked over Hannibal’s shoulder as they made their way back to the basket. Hannibal chuckled and opened the basket, pulling out, what Will thought was from his bed, a blue silk sheet. It wasn’t windy so the sheet laid out nicely on the flat concrete of the roof, which seemed to appease Hannibal. Will smiled at the boy’s need for aesthetics in the most unconventional places. He settled amongst the sheet, with his legs splayed to his side.

“Although I have not tasted the meat, I believe it is duck breast paired with a cream based sauce that has notes of cinnamon, lemon, and something nutty. There is steamed asparagus as well and I managed to get a bottle of Pinot Noir and Tempranillo, it pairs best with duck,” Hannibal explained, his placid tone growing with a note of something warm. He was passionate about food and making an effort to display it properly. It was an art form to him

and Will listened as his fingertips tingle, wanting nothing more to grasp those warm honeyed notes out of the air and keep them close.

“I must admit, I am not well accompanied with finer cuisine and wine. However, thank you for choosing to share this with me,” Will said politely, something new seeing as he was known for being gruff and generally off putting. He had a sneaking suspicion it was Hannibal’s influence.

“For lack of interest or opportunity?” Hannibal asked, neither judging nor condescending.

“I think the answer to that is both. I live alone and survive off of selling lures and fish, I don’t have the funds to purchase quality red meat nor do I have time to cook it in a way that would make the most of it. Fish is hard to get wrong and easy to cook when you have been around it your whole life,” Will answered with a shrug.

“A shame, food should be savored and enjoyed. It never hurts to broaden one's palette. I would have enjoyed cooking for you, Will. It is not every day that a cook comes across an almost virginal palette,” Hannibal poured a small amount of each wine into two glasses, before handing them to Will to allow him to determine for himself which he preferred. Will concluded he wouldn’t try the wine until he had the food to go along with it.

“An experiment just for you, Hannibal?” Will asked coyly, feigning aloofness when he peered at the boy across from him from beneath his lashes. Hannibal didn’t do anything so obvious as to snap his eyes to Will at the lilting tone but Will watched in amusement as Hannibal’s hands stilled in his effort to plate the food for less than a second. He really did enjoy being the one to make tiny hairline fractures in Hannibal’s perfect mask.

“Not an experiment, no,” Hannibal responded in an equally lilting tone, “That would suggest an imbalance of power between us, I would not want that.”

Now it was Will’s turn to be caught with a crack in his person. From the few things he had gleaned from Hannibal, he knew one of them was the fact that the boy prided himself enough to think he was on another level of existence. The people surrounding him were nothing but sheep and livestock. However, Hannibal *was not the shepherd there to guide them* . Will sucked in a breath, hoping the lightness of it was inaudible. He gave Hannibal a calculating look.

“An odd desire for where we are and what is expected of us,” Will answered coolly. A plate, beautifully arranged in a way that Will felt he could almost read the story it was meant to tell from the swirl of the sauce alone, was handed to him. He took it with a grateful nod as Hannibal had an air of consideration around him.

“Are expectations not born from what those around us perceive about us?” Hannibal offered. Will hummed and took a small bite of the duck, instinct wanting to shovel it in his mouth knowing it would be taken from him in a few day’s time but he allowed himself to recall what Hannibal had told him before. So, he savored the flavor of the duck and went for what he believed was the Pinot Noir. He sniffed at it, unsure, and took a small sip allowing the dark red wine to coat his tongue. He could taste the hint of cherry and something almost akin to smoke within the wine, which cut through the oil and fat of the duck perfectly, leaving

only the savory flavor of the meat and spices embedded in it behind. Will decided he quite liked the taste and sensation and thanked whatever deity for Hannibal's wonderful knowledge. He let out a soft sigh at the taste, even if Hannibal hadn't cooked it, the boy knew how to make the best of what he had. That much was obvious. As he rolled the flavors in his mouth around, he also rolled Hannibal's question around in his mind.

"Those expectations are set from the majority, it is hard to have the experience of being unique when there is a blanket placed over you. We are not being perceived because we are not seen amongst the past, present, and future tributes. We are expected to do what they perceive the mass of us would do," Will responded and turned to focus on Hannibal, who had apparently taken favor of watching Will with a muted look of awe and amusement instead of eating his own portion.

"Then are we not to set ourselves apart from the herd?" Hannibal inquired, swirling his glass of wine and smelling it. Will watched with concealed interest as Hannibal's lips wrapped around the rim of the glass. He smirked at the choice of words as well, confirming what he already knew to be true when talking about Hannibal's view of the general public. It amused Will to no end.

"Who's to say we are not part of the herd ourselves?" Will asked a playful jab at the man, looking to get a laugh at Hannibal's poorly concealed annoyance and succeeding.

"The herd would not question the uniqueness of one's self in favor of following the other to its unknown doom," Hannibal chided, voice hard. Will's lips curled into a smile which he hid behind his glass of wine. He was enjoying himself, despite his previous statement in the Training Center. It was nice to engage in actual stimulating conversation with a partner to keep up with his sparring.

"To set one's self apart, what must they do? Blatantly refuse their position or use it to steal the shepherd's herd away, drain him of his life work, his entertainment, and food all at once?" Will shot back, smiling with too many teeth.

"Is there a strategy you prefer, dear Will?" Hannibal asked, his own mouth settling into a smile that may have been unsettling in other companies.

"Yes, Hannibal. I think we may prefer the same one," Will retorted, his voice taking on the breathy, lilting tone from earlier. *Dear Will*. Will wanted to devour him and his words, he licked his lips and watched as Hannibal followed the motion.

"That remains to be seen, but perhaps," Hannibal says, honeyed tones dripping with the tones of a predator recognizing its equal was in the room with it. Will set his glass down slowly, swallowing to accentuate the curve of his throat with the bobbing of it. Hannibal's eyes honed in on the action and his eyes flitted back up to Will's.

"I wonder if we will come to an agreement and how might that conclusion will be reached then," Will didn't know who was trying to bait and pull a confession from who at this point. Will was starting to realize maybe they were in a zero-sum game and neither would get something from the other without offering up part of themselves. Equally balanced,

interesting. Will cocked his head and watched the rolling of molten maroon pools wondering if either of them would win this dance or if they were both doomed to fall.

Chapter End Notes

Your kudos and comments are always appreciated!

Ilgêtis

Chapter Summary

Ilgêtis- *Longing*

“Understand me. I’m not like an ordinary world. I have my madness, I live in another dimension and do not have time for things that have no soul.” -Charles Bukowski

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

He was laying in a bed of carnations, daffodils, and hydrangeas. As he sat up, he looked beyond him and saw the odd mix of flowers spread for as far as he could see. His lips parted, it was so bright, a long stretch of uninterrupted blue sky and puffy clouds lazily drifting amongst it. The meadow was not familiar to him and despite the cheery disposition, warning bells flared in his mind. His thoughts drifted to the flowers, his eyes running over the blurring colors and veined petals. Meanings flashed across his brain, pulled from the vast expanse of his memory.

Carnations for fascination.

Daffodils for regard.

“You’re the only one,” a hushed whisper flitted past his ear with the breeze.

Hydrangea...

“Thank you for understanding, little lamb,” a gravelly, dark voice supplied from behind him.

Will gasped and his hands clutched the earth and flowers around him. His heart rate climbed and he sucked in a breath.

A quiet tut came from behind him and smooth, cool flesh snaked around his wrists to uncurl them from the flowers his hands were crushing. He whined and looked down, eyes widening at the inky skin of large claws touching him. The touch was familiar but Will didn’t comprehend. His distress clouding his train of thoughts. Tears welled up in his eyes as a nose brushed against his nape and inhaled.

“You are distressed, darling. Why?” another whisper from behind him. The voice sounded so sinister but so warm when speaking to him.

“Who are you?” Will whispered, so confused.

“You know who I am, little lamb,” a sharp claw brushed through his curls and twirled a piece around it. The touch was a reminder of another, a name on the tip of his tongue that he couldn’t remember.

Will shook his head frantically, his back was cool from the mock embrace he was now in. The hands had let go of his wrist as they favored sliding around his torso to hold him while the other played with his hair.

“You...you feel familiar but I can’t see you. I don’t know who you are,” Will whined again but the aching distress that he had felt was fading as he became more focused on the silky texture of onyx skin against his own. The thing behind him hummed.

“Do you truly need to see me to know who I am, little one? You feel me, you know me, you just have to remember,” another brush against his nape.

Will quirked his brow and sucked his bottom lip into his teeth, rolling it under the sharp canine. He looked down at the hand resting on his stomach. His own hand moving from beside him without thinking, reaching to touch. The thing behind him stilled as he brushed his fingers along the lengthened bone of its finger. Too large to be anything human, claws too sharp to be read as anything but monstrous. Will thought they were beautiful though, so elegant in their simplicity. A predator was amongst him, was holding him.

Memories danced across to the front of his mind. A river. The cool water curling around him as he moved to cross it. He was reaching for something. He had been interrupted though, Will’s brows furrowed as a phantom pang of anger and annoyance hit him. He wanted whatever he was reaching for so badly. He finally got it. A flashing picture on a film reel unraveled in his mind, watching himself put his hand into the hand of black talons and marble skin frame by frame.

“Oh,” Will realized. He did know who had him perfectly pliable in the middle of a meadow, the tension bleeding from him even as his own self-preservation screamed at him to go. He felt his monster’s smile even though he couldn’t see him. Will’s hands came to rest over the one on his stomach as he relaxed into the embrace. The entity was larger than him by a tenth fold, the whole of its body could cover him easily. That was nice, safe, even though he knew the core of who he was trusting was not one he should feel safe with.

“Yes, my lamb. Such a clever boy you are, I told you that you knew,” his monster whispered to him, smoothing his curls against his head. Will nodded dumbly and blinked blearily. He was suddenly so tired.

“Yes, I know who you are. I know you,” his speech slurred with sleepiness. He breathed softly as he was turned easily by the arms holding him easily to face his monster. His slightly blurred vision studied the face before him, easily making eye contact as his eyes swept over the inky expanse. Even though the sun was bright behind them, his monster sucked in the light like a vacuum. Its large presence consuming everything around him as he held Will.

Sharp cheekbones from a sunken face that meant to betray hunger but gave a harsh and dangerous quality to him. Maroon eyes were such a heavy contrast against the rest of him as they sparkled and shone like amber. Smooth lips and pronounced eyebrow bones, Will ran his finger delicately across the ridge of them. His monster smiled, a smile full of sharp, serrated teeth meant to tear and rip apart its prey.

“Hello, little lamb,” his monster purred. For such a monstrous thing, it handled Will so delicately and conveyed worship with every small touch. A tamed beast that apparently Will held the leash to. No. He didn’t hold the leash, he wasn’t above his monster. He didn’t control him, nor did he want to. He softened him, changed him into something vulnerable. Something with a heart. It held Will close, murmuring in a language he did not know and chest rumbling with contentment as he pulled Will practically on top of his lap to get him as close as he could. His monster smelled of snow and pine and the coppery tang of blood. He inhaled deeply.

“Hello,” Will whispered as he lowered his face to rub his cheek against the sunken in one in front of him. An animal-like display of affection that soothed something within him. Talons scritch along his scalp tenderly as Will let his face rest in the crook of his monster’s neck. That one moment of absolute trust to have Will near something so vulnerable and trust him not to harm it allowed a deep cut of satisfaction to slice through him. A bleating noise came from behind them.

“Look, darling,” another hushed whisper, and Will obeyed. He lifted his head from its resting spot and turned it enough to see. He saw the stag that had stood next to the Wendigo on the river bank. He cocked his head, once again taking in the antlers that were much sharper than regular deer antlers and the black feathers of its pelt that looked...wet. Close enough to see but too far to see just how much, Will’s eyes widened as he took in the amount of blood soaked into fur and feathers that also stained the stag’s jaw.

“Someday, my love, you will let that thing howling inside you out. What you release will be glorious and beautiful and you will see that it was always who you were meant to be. That is who you are, darling,” a long claw pointed at the stag in front of them, “My beautiful, dangerous boy. Unlock the cage, little lamb.”

Once again, Will woke up with rivulets of sweat rolling down his back. He groaned and rolled over to smother himself in the pillow. Remembering his dreams had never been a problem until now. Usually, he spent weeks trying to damage control the aftermath of his sleeping subconscious. Now all he gets is fluttering moments, too small to depict the whole picture. Faint touches that felt more like a whisper than an actual sensation of touch. He remembers the brush against his nape. A voice...

Unlock the cage, little lamb.

Will let out a wounded sigh and drew his knees up to his chest to hold. What was he not grasping? Why couldn’t he remember? The dreams he was succumbing to now seemed more pleasant than usual based upon the little things he could grasp to see. It’s cruel that they are the ones stripped from his memory. He let his cheek rest upon his duvet-covered knee as he

took deep breaths to center himself. He couldn't afford to be distracted by lingering touches and lost languages.

It was the last day in the Training Center before they had the personal evaluation. Which meant the interview before the games were coming. A wave of revulsion washed over Will as he thought about the thousands of hungry eyes waiting to pick him apart, trying to find his weaknesses. Unchecked emotions and even worse unchecked egos.

So far, his time in the Capital hadn't been the worst. After that little picnic fiasco with Hannibal, they had stayed on the roof until the sun had set and the sky blackened over them. They were barely visible to each other but they weren't so easily lost to one another at that moment. They had been silent for quite a while after their conversation and had just observed each other. The silence wasn't suffocating or awkward, it was filled with the warmth of companionship by someone worthy of their attention. The small conversations that had slipped past the confines of their lips hadn't been limited to something as dull of small talk.

Hannibal asked what he had been hoping to find on the roof and Will had told him. Stillness. The quiet that the city was missing, everything was alive in the loudest way possible. Will felt suffocated in the sea rolling anxiety and tension within the training center. He knew which ones were a little too excited to be pitted against one another, not that he could really judge seeing how he was here out of sheer boredom, and he knew the ones who screamed and cried at night. Unable to keep the hands of the Arena away from the confines of their brains.

Hannibal had looked equal measure perplexed and fascinated all at once at the one-word admittance. So much unsaid but plenty heard. Hannibal just didn't seem to know why Will needed that because Will didn't want the questioning to head down the line to why he was so comfortable near Hannibal if he could feel everything. He was not ready to answer that question truthfully. He could give half-truths. Hannibal is hard to glean anything from, a stoic presence in a sea of high-pitched frequencies, which isn't a lie. However, he has been around people like that before. Carefully hidden behind the wall of their custom personality that they've built. Each one of them gave Will a feeling he despised, they felt like hot molasses in the back of his throat. They felt slimy and uncomfortable and Will stayed away because even when they were so professionally hidden, Will always figured them out. What was lying underneath was always so ugly that Will showered and scrubbed his skin raw after slipping into their mindsets. Salty tears stinging his sensitive skin as he worked hard to purge the remnants of themselves. He could feel the monster that Hannibal was and he knew that Hannibal himself didn't know what Will was soon to find out.

His ace in the hole, his gift. What makes Hannibal so different is the fact that even though he hides behind a wall, the wall is entirely him, not a completely untrue personality crafted to suit those around him. He stands out because he wants to, he likes being able to flaunt who he is under the guise of eccentrics rather than cold cruelty he has honed well. Every interest he presents he is genuinely invested in and those interests are interlocked with the man and the beast. He isn't a liar, he hides behind cleverly crafted puns and undetected omissions. He's genuine about his tastes in a subtle way. Will likes that, Hannibal isn't slimy and doesn't leave him feeling dirty when he catches the little slips and cracks. He knows Hannibal has killed. How many and why he has yet to figure out but he is absolutely sure that Hannibal has never denied himself of his instincts and murder would be one of those. Will sees Hannibal

somewhat and already knows how similar their tastes run. He has forged himself on the amusement that Hannibal does not yet see him. He thinks Will has potential for something because even Hannibal isn't immune to Will's own person suit.

Will doesn't indulge his...*whims* all the time because he just does not like to be content with himself. He is in a constant state of mild disapproval with himself, one half wanting to let go and the other desperately clinging to the morals taught through his upbringing. His Daddy was a good man, never laid a finger on anyone, and always said thank you to the fish he caught.

"They don't have the choice to be caught, so, but we have the choice to thank them for the sacrifice they gave us. They lived harmlessly so that we can live."

That is what his Daddy had always told him and sometimes Will catches himself murmuring a quiet thank you to his catches. He never thanked the pigs, however. They did not live as harmless as the fish.

He got up and repeated the new routine that he'd adopted. Shower with clouds scented vanilla and cinnamon wafting around him, get dressed, and go out to eat with Jack and Molly. Only today it seems Freddie had decided to join them. Will scowled at the sight of garish red sailor shorts and an even more obnoxious red faux fur top. Before Will could tuck tail and run back to his room, Freddie had already caught sight of him.

"Will, darling! Come sit, come sit. Seeing as it is a few days before your interviews, we have much to discuss!" She runs in tiny steps up to Will and places her bony hands, leading him to the table.

Will grimaces and wrenches out of her hands, he scurries away from her and sits at his normal place next to Molly.

"You could have left it at that, you didn't have to touch me," Will grumbles and starts nibbling at a biscuit. Molly snorts and Jack cracks a rare smile, while Freddie scoffs.

"I really wish you would be more like how you present yourself to the Capital, you are so charming and beautiful. So much wasted potential," Freddie says.

Will silently seethes. He understands that he isn't the most personable but not everyone is social or loves the flamboyance of the Capital. He now knows there are people who can accept and at least tolerate his boundaries and he will let her know that. He lifts his head from staring at the table and looks Freddie in the eyes. He hears Molly's breath catch and sees in the corner of his eye, Jack's grip tightens on his fork. They have gotten accustomed to his lack of eye contact, and know that he doesn't budge around that. However, this calls for drastic measures.

"So much wasted potential, isn't that what you said? How about we focus on your wasted potential, Freddie? You demand respect but always fall short of getting it, no matter what you do. You're never enough, never have been. The middle child, always overlooked by the youngest's creativity and the oldest's ethic and accomplishments. Poor Freddie, you could never live up to those impossible standards set in place. You would do anything. Bribe, cheat,

steal, and sleep your way to the top if that means you get what you want. Yet, they will still never respect you and that kills you. Now you put yourself in the role of escort expecting these children to come from less than you did and look at you with starry eyes and absolute devotion, and they don't. They despise everything you stand for and that has broken your rose-colored glasses and left you nothing but a shell, how does that feel?" Will spoke low and with a small snarl. He watched Freddie's eyes widen and the tears start to roll down her face.

"How...how could you possibly know that?" her voice cracks.

"Never forget Freddie, I can read you and everyone like an open book. If you would prefer your dirty secrets to be kept to yourself, respect my boundaries," after saying that Will drops his eyes and breaks the contact. He goes on as if nothing happened and as if Molly, Jack, and Freddie aren't looking at him with no small amount of fear in their eyes.

Whatever plan Freddie had to bring to the table fell short as she stayed silent and refused to look anyone in the eye. Will smiled to himself and ate the spread of eggs and pancakes in front of him until Jack decided to clear his throat.

"Well then, this is your last day in the training center. Tomorrow is your evaluation, you have done well sticking to our plan so try not to impress the game makers too much," he tells them. This is usually the point where Jack makes it clear that they are dismissed to go to the training center and Will takes it with stride. He stands up and makes his way to the training center.

"Will! Wait up!" Molly comes rushing up to him so he slows down, "How did you know all that about Freddie?"

Will tenses up and sucks in a deep breath. Even within their childhood, Will tried to keep Molly away from how much he is affected by his empathy and didn't share with her exactly what his gift could do for him. He would have to keep this as vague as possible.

"I can read others a little easier than most. People are like open books to me and their emotions are as well," Will tells her. She raises an eyebrow and narrows her eyes.

"That's all there is to it? It seems to me you're not telling me all there is to it," She presses.

"Drop it, Molly. You don't really wanna know everything there is to it, I saw your face after what I said to Freddie. You're afraid of what I could see in you, what secrets are you hiding, Molly? You don't want me to know them but yet you want to know if I could. I would leave it be, Molly," he says as they reach the sliding door to the training center. Molly purses her lips and nods.

He walks into the training center and turns away from Molly to see Abigail waving at him enthusiastically. He gives her a small smile and heads her way. She's loitering in the knife-throwing station. Will watches the flash of a knife thrown directed towards the heart with a twinge of fondness, the parallels with two different contexts were vastly amusing to him.

He is met with a crushing hug and a laugh. He smiles and gives her the same crushing hug.

"I missed you, Will," Abigail whispers to him.

“You saw me yesterday,” he chuckles.

“I know but it’s so lonely in the penthouse. You treat me like a human and not an object, Nicholas is constantly making condescending remarks. I wish you could stay with me,” she says quietly. Will’s heart squeezes as he thinks about this small girl who has a bad home life and is now pushed around by a person who treats her as something to take his hurt out on, clinging to him and trusting him.

“I’ll protect you, I promise,” He tells her, and just like that Will has broken his fundamental rules for the games. No allies and no attachments. However, he knew he wouldn’t have to shelter Abigail, she has her own darkness that makes her able to protect herself. He would keep her safe until the very end.

“Hello,” a rich voice pulls them away from each other. Hannibal is standing before them in all his glory, assessing them with calculating eyes. For the first time, Will is afraid of Hannibal’s curiosity. He knows that Hannibal has taken a possessive liking towards Will and he knows that, much like Will, doesn’t share what’s his. Abigail shuffles behind Will and stares at Hannibal’s imposing figure with apprehension.

“Hannibal,” Will commands his eyes away from Abigail and onto him. A place that the locked beast within him thought they should stay. Hannibal gives a long once over and his eyes have warmed over considerably.

“Dear Will,” Hannibal gives him a small smile but fierceness in his eyes is still lurking. Will’s face flushes and he feels Abigail gripping onto the back of his shirt. He rolls his lip between his teeth.

“What can we do for you?” Will asks as he watches a strange look come across Hannibal’s face at Abigail’s anxiety. Grief.

That’s interesting.

Chapter End Notes

I am so sorry for the long hiatus and for now leaving this chapter hanging. After getting a job and going back to full-time in-person school the pressure is definitely on, I just could not abandon this story, however. Seeing the notifications from your comments waiting patiently really pushed me to put this chapter out. I am not giving up on this story and the next update will not be in six months. I'll try to put out a new chapter every two to three weeks, they may be shorter than my usual 6-8000 word count but I hope that doesn't take away from your enjoyment and the quality of writing. I love you guys and thank you so much for your support! <3

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